PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 160

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

**SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

SESSION 1988-89

**COMPRISING PERIOD
13 NOVEMBER—16 NOVEMBER 1989**

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THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND [WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES — VOLUME 160

NINETEENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1988-89

House of Commons

Monday 13 November 1989

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

ISLE OF WIGHT BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [9 November],

That this House doth agree with the Lords in their Amendment to the Preamble, page 1, line 4, at the end, to insert the words—

'(2) By the Isle of Wight Act 1980 it was provided that the said section 5 should continue to have effect notwithstanding the provisions of section 262 of the Local Government Act 1972:'—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Debate further adjourned till Tuesday 14 November.

ST. GEORGE'S HILL, WEYBRIDGE, ESTATE BILL *(By Order)*

HYTHE MARINA VILLAGE (SOUTHAMPTON) WAVESCREEN BILL *(By Order)*

NEW SOUTHGATE CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM LIMITED BILL *(By Order)*

CITY OF LONDON (SPITALFIELDS MARKET) BILL *(By Order)*

Orders read for consideration of Lords amendments.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (PENALTY FARES) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Order for further consideration, as amended, read.

To be further considered on Tuesday 14 November.

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL *(By Order)*

BROMLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL (CRYSTAL PALACE) BILL *(By Order)*

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

SOUTH YORKSHIRE LIGHT TRANSIT BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

UNITED MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for consideration, as amended, read.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Tuesday 14 November.

PRIVATE BILLS *[Lords]* SUSPENSION

Motion made,

That so much of the Lords Messages [2nd November, 7th November and 8th November] as relates to the River Tees Barrage and Crossing Bill *[Lords]*, the Happisburgh Lighthouse Bill *[Lords]*, the Great Yarmouth Port Authority Bill *[Lords]*, the Southampton Rapid Transit Bill *[Lords]*, the Heathrow Express Railway Bill *[Lords]*, the London Local Authorities (No. 2) Bill *[Lords]* and the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) Bill *[Lords]* be now considered.

That this House doth concur with the Lords in their Resolution.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

PENZANCE ALBERT PIER EXTENSION BILL

Motion made,

That so much of the Lords Message [2nd November] as relates to the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill be now considered.

That the Promoters of the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first, second and third time and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.— *[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

NOTTINGHAM PARK ESTATE BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Nottingham Park Estate Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office no later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That, if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That, as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

That the Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.— *[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Vale of Glamorgan (Barry Harbour) Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first and shall be ordered to be read a second time;

That the Petitions against the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.— *[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

MEDWAY TUNNEL BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Medway Tunnel Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration, signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first and shall be ordered to be read a second time;

That the Petitions against the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) (NO. 3) BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (No. 3) Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration, signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration had been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first time and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills;

That, no petitions against the Bill having been presented within the time limited within the present Session, no Petitioners shall be heard before any committee on the Bill save those who complain of any amendment as proposed in the filled up Bill or of any matter which arises during the progress of the Bill before the committee;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL *[Lords]*

Ordered,

That the Promoters of the Birmingham City Council (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave, except as provided by these orders, to suspend further proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid:

Ordered,

That, if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration, signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

Ordered,

That, as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be read the first time and referred to the Examiners Of Petitions for Private Bills;

Ordered,

That, no petitions against the Bill having been presented within the time limited within the present Session, no Petitioners shall be heard before any committee on the Bill save those who complain of any amendment as proposed in the filled up Bill or of any matter which arises during the progress of the Bill before the committee;

Ordered,

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

Ordered,

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE SOUTHBANK BILL

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the British Film Institute Southbank Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the British Railways Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceeding and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

BROMLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL (CRYSTAL PALACE) BILL

Ordered,

That the Promoters of the Bromley London Borough Council (Crystal Palace) Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the

Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

Ordered,

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

Ordered,

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

Ordered,

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

Ordered,

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

Ordered,

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

City of London (Various Powers) Bill

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the City of London (Various Powers) Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Redbridge London Borough Council Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of the House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Tuesday 14 November.

Oral Answers to Questions

2.38 pm

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Further to my point of order on Friday, Mr. Speaker. May I draw your attention to the fact that in the conduct of private——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This has nothing to do with questions. I shall take the hon. Gentleman's point of order, if it is connected with private business, at the proper time.

ENERGY

Electricity Privatisation

1. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he plans to set a date for the privatisation of the electricity industry.

18. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects the restructuring of the electricity supply industry to be implemented; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. John Wakeham): The Government intend to implement the new structure of the industry at the end of March 1990 and to complete its privatisation within this Parliament; the area boards will be offered for sale in autumn 1990 and the two generating companies will be offered for sale in the first half of 1991.

Mr. Macdonald: I congratulate the Secretary of State on his new-found enthusiasm for the mixed economy, but I warn him that he still has some way to go. Does he agree that the decision to abandon the privatisation of nuclear power should have been taken 12 months ago by his predecessor, and that if it had been, he would not have been left with this shambles?

Mr. Wakeham: I agree with the hon. Gentleman this far —*[Interruption.]* It is not very far. If the decision had been taken before I would not have been involved in dealing with the matter when I arrived. However, it was not until the late summer and the beginning of autumn that the terms which the private sector wanted for the privatisation of nuclear power became apparent and those terms, as I reported to the House on Thursday, I was unable to recommend.

Mr. Benn: Is the Secretary of State aware that the statute under which he exercises his responsibilities, which was passed by the coalition Government in April 1945, requires him to be personally responsible for promoting economy and efficiency in the supply of energy? Will he now institute a public inquiry into how it was that successive chairmen of the generating board misled successive Secretaries of State on the true costs of nuclear power, at a cost to the taxpayers and electricity consumers of many billions of pounds? In those circumstances does he think it right that Lord Marshall should be compensated when he leaves the generating board?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not believe that an inquiry is necessary. The principal concerns about the price of nuclear power arose because of the high capital charges and the return on investment and not so much, as some have suggested, because of the decommissioning costs and fuel service charges. I believe that those concerns arose, as I told the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) a few moments ago, in the summer of this year—that was why I was faced with a difficult decision.

I fully accept all my responsibilities as laid down under the statute—as no doubt the right hon. Gentleman did when in my position—and I do not believe that a public inquiry is necessary.

Mr. Rost: Now that nuclear power is excluded from the privatisation is there not an overwhelming case for adjusting the imbalance between National Power and PowerGen to create a more competitive climate among producers?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise my hon. Friend's point, but I do not believe that that is necessary. I believe that a competitive market is developing and the proposals that I have made will ensure fair competition between the generators, whatever their size, especially the independent generators which will strongly enter the market. To change the allocation of stations at this stage would risk failing to complete privatisation in this Parliament and that would not be in the consumers' interests.

Mr. Dobson: Does the Secretary of State agree that his statement last Thursday, like the 13th chime of the clock, cast doubt on all that had gone before? Is it not true that no one believes any of the figures quoted by his Department in furtherance of privatisation? Does he agree that it would be better, particularly as the Government are blaming the advisers and the generating board for those figures, if the Government published a White Paper spelling out all the advice that they have received on costs and prices and projections of costs and prices for oil, coal and nuclear power stations? Would not that permit rational discussion of what is happening and some rational decisions to be taken? In short, would it not be best if the Government came clean on figures?

Mr. Wakeham: One problem in the past has been that some of these costs have been hidden away and we have not fully realised what they are. We believe that by our creating an electricity generating industry that is highly competitive, the market will determine the best costs, and the Government will welcome the competition that follows.

2. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what progress has been made in the setting up of independent generation companies after the restructuring of the electricity supply industry.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Michael Spicer): There are approaching 20 independent projects in prospect, which will provide up to 15 per cent. of present capacity in England and Wales. The first new independent generating company to be established as a result of our privatisation proposals is Lakeland Power, which has just signed a contract with the North Western electricity board for 220 MW of gas-fired generation.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my hon. Friend accept that without the privatisation programme we might not have heard the true cost of nuclear power and that, therefore, good has come of it? Does he also accept that the rationale behind splitting the CEGB into only two companies—of

which one, National Power, will produce 70 per cent. of the electricity—was nuclear power? As that rationale has now disappeared, does he agree that competition to keep down the cost of energy is most important and that there should be more than two generation companies, possibly four or five, so that people can see that privatisation is for the good of the consumer?

Mr. Spicer: I agree with about three quarters of that. I agree entirely with my hon. Friend that competition is the force which will bring down costs. Of course, that competition is absent in the present structure in which the monopolist sets up the costs and passes them straight to the consumer. I part company with my hon. Friend when he says that to generate competition it is necessary further to sub-divide the two major companies. There will be a multiplicity of companies and company sizes and, as I said in my initial answer, we know of 20 independent projects coming to the market representing about 15 per cent. of present capacity. That means that there will be a multiplicity of competition.

Mr. Allen McKay: Why is the Minister so confident about the cost of electricity when a document from his Department to the Cabinet said that, on privatisation, electricity prices would rise by 15 per cent. for domestic consumers and by 25 per cent. for industrial consumers?

Mr. Spicer: I shall not comment on leaked documents, and old documents at that. There is no doubt that the competitive pressures that will exist in the industry as a result of privatisation will put downward pressure on costs. As I said, a multiplicity of new projects have been proposed with cost structures considerably below those of the present industry. New types of generation, for instance gas-fired generation, are coming forward. They have much lower cost structures and that will have an effect on prices.

Mr. Andy Stewart: In view of the statement last week by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy on the future of the nuclear generating industry, does my hon. Friend agree that it is time to promote more strongly and quickly the environmentally friendly mini-power stations to take advantage of the cheap coal that is produced in Nottinghamshire?

Mr. Spicer: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend that the Nottinghamshire UDM pits have been increasing their efficiency quite remarkably. They are now among the highest productivity pits in the country. If those pits continue to improve their present rate of productivity and increased efficiency, there will be a great future not only for Nottinghamshire but for the coal industry as a whole.

Mr. Doran: The Secretary of State will be aware that the oil industry and the gas producers have invested heavily with a view to entering the electricity generating market with a cleaner fuel—gas. Given the present shambles of electricity privatisation, what are the prospects for that investment proceeding?

Mr. Spicer: That is a non-sequitur. The gas-fired generation proposals are made possible only because of privatisation and because of the competitive pressures that that will place on the industry. Far from its being a shambles, we are setting up a whole new structure that will remarkably increase the pace of competition in the industry and the downward pressure on costs. Those things will benefit the consumer.

Mr. Favell: My hon. Friend will be aware of the plan to place National Power's headquarters in Swindon and those of PowerGen in Birmingham. That will result in Europa house, a regional headquarters in Stockport, being phased out and 600 or 700 jobs being lost or relocated. When the new nuclear company is formed will my hon. Friend consider basing it in Stockport where there already is a dedicated, experienced and hard working staff—especially of women who cannot move elsewhere and who, if they were in the south, would be worth their weight in gold? The present plan is for a headquarters in the midlands and one in the south, and a headquarters in the north-west would be very welcome.

Mr. Spicer: I know that my hon. Friend has been pressing me hard on behalf of his constituents, whose jobs are at risk. As to whether, under the new arrangements, a headquarters will be placed in his constituency, I cannot give him a definitive answer, but I am sure that his points have been noted.

British Coal

3. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Wakeham: I meet the chairman of British Coal regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

Mr. Illsley: Did the Secretary of State recently discuss the suggestion which appears to have been put to the Cabinet, that between 12,000 and 30,000 jobs will be lost in the coal industry over the next three or four years? Will he confirm that those job losses will have to be met by compulsory redundancies?

Mr. Wakeham: No, I did not discuss it in those terms. Coal contracts are a matter for commercial negotiations between the parties. Those are still in progress, and it will be for British Coal to decide what manpower it will require in the light of the tonnage that it can profitably produce and sell in competition with other fuels. I hope that it will get a large slice of the market.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: When my right hon. Friend next talks to the chairman of British Coal, will he point out that although his announcement last week may not have been very good news for the nuclear industry, it is potentially extremely good news for the coal industry and for the future of new coal technologies? Will he point out that the coal industry has everything to gain from increasing its competitiveness and further intensifying its productivity?

Mr. Wakeham: The chairman of British Coal is a wise and experienced person, and I am sure that he has already taken those points on board. I have no doubt that when I see him again shortly, I shall discuss these matters. My hon. Friend is right—there is a good future for British Coal if it can produce coal at prices that meet those of the competition. I have every reason to believe that it can produce a substantial part of our basic fuel requirements.

Mr. Hardy: Is the Minister aware that it would be disadvantageous for Britain if we became dependent on foreign coal supplies? Does he accept that a number of foreign coal suppliers are already prepared to sell coal to Britain at a price cheaper than that at which it is available in Europe? Is that not an extremely dangerous position,

and one which he would do well to advise the country not to accept, as dependence on foreign coal is strategically unwise, and would become enconomically foolish?

Mr. Wakeham: Dependence upon any form of fuel would be unwise. We require a diversity of supply. As I said in a reply to the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) on Thursday, British Coal must make itself competitive against not only imported coal but oil and natural gas. That is the challenge for it, and I am sure that it will rise to the occasion.

Sir Trevor Skeet: As there is likely to be a shortage of electricity in the late 1990s, particularly with the elimination of the three nuclear stations in the programme, how does my right hon. Friend propose to take up the shortfall? Has he discussed this with the chairman of British Coal?

Mr. Wakeham: I have satisfied myself that there will not be a capacity shortfall. Already, a substantial number of independent projects are coming forward. There is potential for life extension of some plant, and I am wholly confident that our privatisation proposals will ensure that capacity demands are met.

Mr. Barron: Given that, last week, the Secretary of State announced that the Government would protect the nuclear industry via the British taxpayer, is it fair that the British coal industry, which over the past four years has cut costs by 30 per cent., improved productivity by over 90 per cent. and suffered job losses of 140,000, should lose jobs because of the importation of foreign coal?

Mr. Wakeham: We are not protecting the nuclear industry in the sense that it will be cash-positive from the day that it is set up. The hon. Gentleman, who knows a great deal about the industry, was less than fair in the way in which he put his supplementary question. He did not mention that the taxpayer has financed over £6·5 billion of investment and provided over £10 billion of grant since 1979. That shows an unrivalled commitment to the coal industry by the Government.

Mr. Roger King: Did my right hon. Friend discuss with the chairman the environmental impact of fossil fuel power stations on our ecological system? Did he see "The Money Programme" on BBC2 last night, during which we were told that an American power station has been set up which is energy efficient and, as far as possible, emission proof? The cost of taking out the CO_2 has been passed over to a South American country in the form of a grant to plant millions of trees to remove CO_2 from the atmosphere. Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is a sensitive approach and one which should interest British Coal?

Mr. Wakeham: British Coal is well aware of the need to improve the environmental acceptability of coal as a fuel, as are the generating companies that will use the fuel. I have no doubt that British Coal will take note of what my hon. Friend said. I do not watch television very often. I feel like my right hon. and noble Friend Lord St. John of Fawsley: I seem to appear on television more than watch it these days.

East Midlands Electricity Board

8. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the East Midlands electricity board; and what matters they discussed.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of the East Midlands electricity board regularly and discuss a range of issues of mutual interest.

Mr. Haynes: Is the Minister aware that the chairman of the East Midlands electricity board, Mr. Harris, and the local manager for the area, Mr. Huddleston, are open, honest and above board? Why has a scandalous document been leaked from the Cabinet? It is all right for the Minister to say that everything is lovely in Nottinghamshire, but we want some honesty, not flannel. The document has the name of the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) written all over it. We want some honesty at the Dispatch Box. What jobs will be protected in the Nottinghamshire area—the area that I represent?

Mr. Spicer: The hon. Gentleman had a good week last week and I hope that he will not push his luck by going completely over the top this week. The substance of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question is why did the document leak. The answer is that I have no idea.

Mr. Michael Morris: Is it not a fact that the East Midlands electricity board, under the chairmanship of Mr. Harris, is one of our most efficient electricity boards? Is that not because of its dependence primarily on coal? Can my hon. Friend reassure the board's members that it will be given every encouragement to produce a diversified electricity supply?

Mr. Spicer: I agree with my hon. Friend and with the hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes). The East Midlands electricity board is extremely efficient and a very good board. It relies largely on coal for its electricity. So far this year we have allowed £55 million worth of investment in the Nottinghamshire coal pits. Last year we allowed £73 million worth. With that investment and the increased productivity that the pits are showing, there should be a great future for coal from Nottinghamshire.

South of Scotland Electricity Board

9. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman the South of Scotland electricity board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Wakeham: I have met Mr. Miller informally.

Mr. Hood: Is the Secretary of State aware that Mr. Miller, almost single handedly, has attempted over the past two years to destroy the Scottish coal industry on the altar of buying cheap imported coal from South Africa, Colombia and elsewhere? Given his fetish for nuclear power, will the right hon. Gentleman tell us what discussions he intends to have with Mr. Miller on who is to buy expensive ring-fenced nuclear power?

Mr. Wakeham: These are matters for discussion with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. However, Mr. Miller is a very successful

chairman of the South of Scotland electricity board. The nuclear industry in Scotland does not suffer from the same disadvantages of cost that were apparent in England.

Mr. Wallace: While I am sure that Mr. Miller did not welcome the Secretary of State's announcement last week, I certainly welcome his rather belated rendezvous with reality. Will he be discussing with Mr. Miller and others responsible for the generation of electricity how the Government intend to plug the hole which must now appear in the Government's energy policy, having predicted 10 nuclear power stations in their 1979 manifesto? Will the right hon. Gentleman be increasing resources for the development of alternative fields, renewable resources and energy efficiency, and in particular reversing the cuts in his own energy efficiency office?

Mr. Wakeham: The biggest single step that any Government could take to improve energy efficiency is to complete the privatisation of the electricity supply industry because the efficient use of energy and the pressure on costs which that will produce will be the most beneficial effects of all. I am perfectly satisfied that there is sufficient capacity for the present and for the future. Substantial numbers of independent projects are coming forward and I believe that they will be highly competitive.

Energy Sources

10. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what incentives there will be to develop renewable sources of energy after the reconstruction of the electricity industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Renewables will benefit from the non-fossil fuel obligation in general and in particular from the 600 MW of capacity that we have reserved exclusively for them. There are already clear signs that the obligation has provided a considerable encouragement to the development of renewables.

Mr. Bowden: What steps are my hon. Friend and his Department taking to encourage the exploitation of landfill gas?

Mr. Spicer: A lot is going on with regard to landfill gas. At the moment 30 landfill gas schemes are operational and a further 30 in the pipeline. Thirteen are generating electricity with a capacity of 16 MW. We expect them to generate 50 MW by 1992 and 150 to 175 MW by the year 2000. We are spending £1 million a year, and we have just produced a video explaining the considerable economic and environmental benefits of landfill gas.

Dr. Thomas: Will the Minister report progress on the plans for the construction of wind generation stations, particularly in Wales? Do the Government intend to increase the megawatt reserve for renewable sources of energy?

Mr. Spicer: So far as the non-fossil fuel obligation is concerned, we consider that the 600 MW special tranche is adequate at the moment. In future, the Secretary of State will have the power to increase that, should the need arise. Research into wind generation is a major item of expenditure. We are spending £4·5 million on wind development. We expect the wind farm in south Wales to be completed by 1990. There will be one in Cornwall in 1991 and one in the north-east by 1992. Those three experimental wind farms should be operational by those dates.

Mr. Allen: Is the Minister aware that the discovery of the cost of nuclear power did not happen last week or in the past year but has been pointed out at public inquiries into Sizewell B and elsewhere by environmentalists and those who are committed to renewable energy sources for at least a decade? Will the Minister invest the same amount of money in renewable energy sources as the Government and their predecessors have invested in their obsession with nuclear energy?

Mr. Spicer: The two are totally non-comparable and are two different items of expenditure on research. We have said quite categorically that we shall spend on renewable research what is appropriate to developing that programme as fast as is practicable in terms of market application. We are spending more than ever before on renewables and the budget is rising.

Mr. Stern: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the principal reasons for the privatisation programme was to enable different sources of energy to have the freedom to raise the capital that they needed in the market? Does he agree that the greatest incentive for renewable energy sources is that as a result of last Thursday's announcement they will find it much easier to raise money in the market?

Mr. Spicer: I agree with all that my hon. Friend says. He rightly says that one of the advantages of privatisation and of the structure that we have set up for the industry is that it encourages renewable and other sources of energy. We have given renewable resources special protection. As there will no longer be 3 GW of PWR capacity, it will be filled by other sources, including renewables.

Severn Barrage

11. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what response he will make to the general report on the Severn barrage project by the Severn barrage study group; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Peter Morrison): Over the next two years, further work on the Severn barrage will be undertaken. This will include some site-specific environmental work and a study of the organisation and financing issues for a barrage.

Mr. Colvin: Does my right hon. Friend accept that, at an estimated 5·5p per KW hour, tidal power electricity is not yet competitive, at least in the short-term, but is environmentally much more acceptable than electricity from coal, gas, oil or nuclear sources? As it has infinite life and no decommissioning costs, it could become much more competitive. Does he therefore agree that it is the sort of project that should attract public and private funds?

Mr Morrison: I half agree with my hon. Friend. I wholeheartedly agree with him about the greenhouse effect, but I hope that he will agree that further inquiries into the environmental impact of a project of this magnitude—it would be vast—should be made. An environmental impact statement, which would cost another £5 million or £10 million, would be necessary before any further decision to go ahead could be taken.

Mr. Flynn: Does the Minister agree that if the CEGB and the Government had not successively deceived the public about the true cost of nuclear power we would already have a range of tidal barrages around our coast producing the cheapest electricity in the world, in the same way as the power station at La Rance in France is now doing? That distortion was described in the latest statement from National Power, which said that the only reason why it planned to invest in nuclear power was the Government's privatisation proposal and the obligations under that? Will he give an assurence that local authorities in Gwent and other areas will be compensated by the Government for the money that they spent opposing the PWRs at Hinckley point and Wylfa B, because it was entirely the Government's fault that they spent it?

Mr. Morrison: No, I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. I imagine that he heard what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said earlier in Question Time about nuclear power.

Energy Conservation

12. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to encourage further the insulation of homes, offices and factories to promote the conservation of energy.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The energy efficiency office will continue to encourage the adoption of improved insulation and other energy efficiency measures through its best practice programme and other initiatives.

The promotion of energy efficiency will remain a high priority over the coming period.

Mr. Shersby: Will my right hon. Friend give fresh consideration to the need to conserve energy by better insulation of local authority housing? Will he discuss that matter with our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment? Is my right hon. Friend aware that many tenants living in cold, damp homes would benefit considerably from better insulation and better conservation of energy? Does he agree that this matter should be kept under review and discussed by his Department and the Department of the Environment?

Mr. Morrison: I assure my hon. Friend that discussions take place between the Secretaries of State for Energy and for the Environment about precisely the point that he raises. I refer my hon. Friend to the fact that community insulation projects have managed to do precisely what my hon. Friend would like for several hundred thousands households, most of which are in the public sector.

Mr. Morgan: Does the Minister agree that his reply seeks to hide the total hypocrisy of the Government on energy efficiency? Does he agree that today's news that sales of energy efficiency products have fallen by 12 per cent. in the past year compared with the previous year shows how mistaken the Government's policy is on energy efficiency? Does he agree that it is similar to the divide in the Government's policy on nuclear power, which was praised to the skies by the Prime Minister last Wednesday, buried by the Secretary of State on Thursday and resurrected by the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment on Friday in the debate on global warming? Nobody knows what the Government's policy is any more.

Mr. Morrison: I think that the hon. Gentleman misunderstands the Government's position. If he had read the newspapers, he would be aware of references to energy efficiency on virtually every page of every newspaper. That is entirely thanks to the Government putting it at the top of the list of priorities some time ago. Our campaign has worked successfully. That is why hundreds of thousands of people take energy efficiency far more seriously than ever before.

The hon. Gentleman will know also, if he bothers to look at the statistics, that between 1983, when the campaign started, and 1987 some £2·4 billion has been saved, thanks to the work of the energy efficiency office in making everyone aware of energy efficiency. The Government take the matter very seriously.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Hyndburn

79. **Mr. Ken Hargreaves:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to pay an official visit to the constituency of Hyndburn in the county palatine.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Kenneth Baker): In my capacity as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster I have no plans to visit Hyndburn at present.

Mr. Hargreaves: That is a disappointing reply, although I realise that the last time my right hon. Friend accepted my invitation to visit Hyndburn it cost the Department for which he was then responsible a great deal of money. I ask him to reconsider his reply so that he can see how we spent the money that he allocated to us and how Government money has assisted us in creating new jobs and industry and attracting the Zeri project to Hyndburn, with 2,700 jobs in the pipeline. Will my right hon. Friend do his best to ensure that, in this new situation, services at Accrington Victoria hospital are not diminished?

Mr. Baker: As my hon. Friend well knows, I have visited Hyndburn in many capacities. I remember canvassing for him in the 1983 election, when we won the seat against the odds, and I remember supporting him in 1987. I look forward to supporting him in 1991 or 1992, when he will be returned again as the Member for Hyndburn. One reason why he will be returned is that unemployment in his constituency has fallen by some 56 per cent. over the past three years.

Mr. Pike: If the right hon. Gentleman agreed to go to Hyndburn, how would he explain to the people of Lancashire and Hyndburn the poll tax bills that they will have to pay, given that more than 70 per cent. of the people in the terraced houses in north-east Lancashire will lose considerably?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman should remember that in the first year of the community charge some £700 million will flow to those authorities in receipt of safety net money. In addition, £100 million will flow to those areas which have a low level of domestic rates and there will be £300 million in transitional relief. Many people in Lancashire will benefit from that.

Heraldry

80. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he has any responsibility for heraldry in the duchy.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have no responsibility for heraldry.

Mr. Baldry: That is a great pity, because a bunch of people are wandering around the country masquerading under the red rose of Lancashire and of St. George. Should not that scandalous state of affairs be reported to the College of Arms, which could then devise a legitimate heraldic device for the group in question—a windbag rampant, perhaps?

Mr. Baker: Many people in Lancashire bitterly resent the fact that the symbol of Lancashire, the red rose, has been hijacked by the Labour party. The red rose of Lancashire is a symbol of unity, not of division, so its use in that way is a complete charade because the Labour party has not changed its policies. Its symbol remains the red flag, as was shown by the fact that 10 days ago Labour Members stood up in the Chamber and sang it.

Duchy Land (Economic Activity)

81. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he last reviewed the level of economic activity on lands owned by the duchy.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The level of economic activity within the Duchy of Lancaster estate is under constant review.

Mr. Jack: My right hon. Friend will know from his assiduous attention to the economic activity within the county of Lancashire that that activity is under threat due to the irresponsible action by aerospace workers at the British Aerospace Strand road site in their misguided pursuit of a 35-hour week. Will my right hon. Friend join me in condemning this action, which will ruin the productivity and competitiveness of one of Lancashire's most important industries?

Mr. Baker: I completely support my hon. Friend. With wage demands of that kind, one has to be aware of what will happen to the competitiveness of British industry, which has been improved enormously in the past 10 years in Lancashire, as elsewhere. In the north-west, there has been a 10·4 per cent. increase in the number of businesses since we have been in office, which has added to the prosperity of the north-west. I hope that that will not be weakened or threatened by such irresponsible claims.

Duchy Business

83. **Mr Winnick:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is the average number of hours per week he spends on the business of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, I spend up to one quarter of my time carrying out my duties as a member of the Government.

Mr. Winnick: In view of the present turmoil of Tory politics, would it not be more appropriate for the right hon. Gentleman to spend more time on the affairs of the Duchy? Does he not consider it appropriate at this stage to pluck up the courage to stand for the leadership of the Tory party? He might even win, and thank me afterwards.

Mr. Baker: I looked carefully at all the questions asked of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster over the past 10 years, and especially those asked of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) when he held the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster and also the chairmanship of the Tory party. I found that the hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) asked almost exactly the same question three years ago. He was saying that that we would not win the 1987 election, but we did. Now he is saying that we shall not win the next election, but we shall—not least because the hon. Gentleman has a very small majority and I look on the constituency of Walsall, North as a Tory gain.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Commission Meetings

88. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission when the Public Accounts Commission last met; and what subjects were discussed.

Sir Peter Hordern (Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission): The commission last met on 16 May when among the subjects discussed was a report by the National Audit Office auditors on accommodation arrangements at the NAO headquarters building.

Mr. Allen: Has the Chairman met Dr. Bill Jack, the new Comptroller and Auditor-General for Northern Ireland, and, if so, has he discussed with him the levels of staffing and remuneration for that office? Has he had a chance yet to look at the estimates from the Public Accounts Commission?

Sir Peter Hordern: We have not yet had a chance to meet Dr. Jack since his appointment. However, we were able to meet him before then. On behalf of the House, I congratulate Dr. Jack on his appointment and also to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Calvert, who bore the office of the Comptroller and Auditor-General Northern Ireland very well for nine years. The Public Accounts Commission expects to consider the estimates for next year on 12 December.

Mr. Tim Smith: What steps is the Public Accounts Commission taking to ensure that there are no unnecessary restrictions or impediments to the National Audit Office employing the best possible staff at all levels? Is my hon. Friend satisfied that the Comptroller and Auditor General in particular and his staff generally are paid the proper rate for the job?

Sir Peter Hordern: The commission is satisfied that the staff of the Comptroller and Auditor General are paid at competitive rates and also have the benefit of extra earnings for merit awards. I regret to say, however, that that is not the case for the Comptroller and Auditor General himself or for the Comptroller and Auditor General Northern Ireland. We have made representations on that to the Government and propose to do so again.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Engagements

84. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when last he visited the county palatine; and what were his official engagements there.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for St. Helens, North (Mr. Evans) on 2 November.

Mr. Squire: Has my right hon. Friend been able to assist some of the residents of the county palatine? Has he found, as I have found in my constituency, that although people are clear about the Government's defence policies, they are thoroughly confused about the Opposition's defence policies and wholly ignorant of those of the Social Democrats?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Supplementary questions must have some relevance.

Mr. Baker: I am not at all surprised at that——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That topic is way beyond the scope of the question.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: When the Chancellor is next in Lancashire, will he consider the appointment of justices of the peace? Does he accept that justices of the peace in the whole of the area for which he is responsible show a preponderance of people from middle-class and Right-wing backgrounds, rather than a good balance across the community? The right hon. Gentleman's predecessor gave a clear commitment in the House to ensure that more JPs came from working-class backgrounds within the area for which he was responsible. Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that that commitment is carried out?

Mr. Baker: I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's criticism, because it is unfair. That aspect of my responsibilities is important. I presided at a magistrates meeting in the Wirral and I am anxious that people appointed to the honourable and important role of justice of the peace represent broad bands of society. I make every effort to ensure that that is the case, as do my advisers.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Archbishop of Canterbury (Rome Visit)

86. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, what was the cost to the Commissioners of the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent visit to Rome.

Mr. Michael Alison (Second Church Estates Commissioner, Representing Church Commissioners): The archbishop's expenses are reimbursed by the Church Commissioners on a quarterly basis. No claim has yet been made in respect of the period in question, but the archbishop's private office was kind enough to tell me informally, in advance of submitting a claim, that the cost was in the region of £8,500.

Mr. Summerson: As one of the results of the archbishop's visit to Rome was to give comfort to those whose activities will cause schisms in the Church of England, will my right hon. Friend consider giving similar resources to those who oppose those activities?

Mr. Alison: My hon. Friend singles out just one of the matters that divide the Church of England and the Church of Rome. Many sections of the Church of England have expressed gratitude and received encouragement as a result of the archbishop's visit to the Pope.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Televising of Parliament

89. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will take steps to allow hon. Members to have the same facility as some outside organisations in receiving the televised picture of the Chamber in their own offices.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Sir Geoffrey Howe): No, Sir.

Mr. Allen: The Lord President will be aware that more than 40 organisations outside the House will be able to receive the live television pictures, including South African television, Israeli television and Government Departments. At this very moment, Mr. Bernard Ingham —he who must be relayed—may well be receiving the television picture live. For all we know, he may be whispering into the Lord President's ear a startling and direct reply to my question. Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman prepared to extend the facility to hon. Members in their offices?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman knows that that is essentially a matter not for me but for the House. Sound broadcasting access is accorded to several organisations outside the House and to certain Departments of State. It has been decided that the television feed should be similarly available to those organisations and people. The Select Committee on Broadcasting and subsequently the Select Committee on Televising of Proceedings of the House decided that no such facilities should be provided for hon. Members, save in the Lobbies. The reasons given were, first, that it would be expensive—perhaps not the most important reason—secondly, that it would be intrusive to hon. Members who share rooms and, thirdly and most importantly, that it would diminish the likelihood of hon. Members being present in the Chamber. The latter reason impressed the Select Committee and that is how the matter stands.

Mr. Dykes: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the hon. Gentleman's suggestion would be a bad idea because, as my right hon. and learned Friend inferred, it would keep hon. Members away from the Chamber? The House has consistently avoided sound radio broadcasting of the proceedings in hon. Members' offices for just that reason. However, as hon. Members in various parts of the House will need to see what is happening in the Chamber, would it not be a good idea for my right hon. and learned Friend to discuss with the House authorities the provision of an adequate number of monitors in various locations?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I suspect that the provision of monitors may have the same effect, although on a smaller scale as provision in hon. Members' rooms. The Select

Committee may consider the matter again in the future, but it was unanimous in recommending against provision of facilities beyond those currently available.

Dr. Cunningham: Will the Lord President of the Council keep an open mind on the matter? Why should we not review it at the end of the experimental period? Is it not rather curious that we are to provide the facility for people in the media and others—who, for all I know, may include press officers in Government Departments—but deny it to hon. Members? Can we not consider the matter again when the experiment is over?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Both the hon. Gentleman and I will have to keep an open mind because we serve on the Select Committee which will be reviewing developments in the months ahead. The matter was considered by the Select Committee, which reached a unanimous conclusion. The burden of proof in the opposite direction must therefore be discharged.

Mr. Butler: Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that if Sky Television provides full coverage of the House, as it intends to do, hon. Members will be able to provide facilities in their offices for themselves?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am not sure that the technicalities would allow that. The matter would have to be considered by the Select Committee in the light of developments.

Mr. Wallace: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman reflect on the fact that, from next Tuesday, the many organisations that will have access to our televised proceedings, will be able to witness the trivial banter that we have just heard, which is known as questions to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman reflect on the question rota, bearing in mind the fact that we have to go through that exercise but have no opportunity to address questions to Scottish Law Officers?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall certainly consider that matter with the seriousness that it deserves, but I repudiate absolutely the allegation that viewers would be unimpressed by the splendid performance of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Members' Staff (Contracts)

90. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Lord President of the Council when he expects the circular reminding right hon. and hon. Members about the need to provide contracts of employment to the Fees Office in respect of staff to be issued.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Accountant hopes to issue reminder letters to Members later this month.

Mr. Rooker: Will the Lord President confirm that staff employed by hon. Members and paid by the Fees Office are supposed to have contracts of employment lodged with the Fees Office but that on 30 June this year only 709 of the 1,287 staff paid by the Fees Office and employed by hon. Members had such contracts lodged? That is simply not on. Hon. Members are not famed for being good employers and I hope that the Lord President will pursue the matter after the issue of the circular to make sure that the laggards toe the line and become decent employers.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The number of hon. Members who have complied is broadly in line with the figure given by the hon. Gentleman. He is right that the relevant resolution of the House passed on 21 July 1987 makes arrangements requiring a statement to be lodged by hon. Members who use the Fees Office to pay their staff. That followed the recommendation of the Top Salaries Review Body some time before. The fact that a reminder letter is to be issued later this month shows that the matter is being taken seriously.

Mr. Squire: The news that the Lord President has just given will be greeted with some concern. Can my right hon. and learned Friend say whether the omissions include staff employed for longer than two or three years? If so, does he agree that that is all the more scandalous?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: In general terms, the documents have been lodged more regularly on behalf of newly employed staff because both employer and employee have been made familiar with the requirement at the start of the contract period, whereas the obligation has not been complied with significantly in respect of longer-serving staff who may well have been accustomed to operating in a more informal world. That is the reason for the difference in the figures.

Press and Public Relations

91. **Mr. Winnick:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what is the average annual expenditure of his office on press and public relations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Privy Council Office has no budget allocated specifically to press and public relations, and employs no press or information staff. A very small proportion of the office's staffing and administration costs arises from the handling of such matters but it could not be accurately quantified.

Mr. Winnick: Does the Lord President consider that if he had more to spend on press and publicity he would be on a more equal footing with Mr. Ingham, who is increasingly being seen as the real deputy Prime Minister?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is joining the modest band of those obsessed with that proposition. I invite him to repudiate his obsession.

Division Bells

92. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he will review the procedures for testing Division Bells.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: No. I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave him on 24 October. I am not aware of any general concern over our current Division Bell testing procedure.

Mr. Thurnham: Will my right hon. and learned Friend see what he can do to avoid the disturbance created by testing the Division Bells at 9 o'clock every morning when hon. Members are at their desks trying to work and make telephone calls? What is the statistical justification for testing the Division Bells every day? Could not the engineers test them just as well at 2.30 pm as at 9 am?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The habit of testing the Division Bells by this physical means has been in place for a long

time. It has been found to be convenient for that relatively unadvanced piece of technology. It seems to work satisfactorily and it does not disturb as many hon. Members at 9 am as it might later in the day. My hon. Friend is among a relatively small minority of hon. Members to be found on the premises complaining about the early testing of the alarm systems.

Mr. Bernard Ingham

93. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what steps he is taking to improve facilities in the House for the Prime Minister's press secretary.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: None, Sir.

Mr. Dalyell: As one of the House of Common's best remembered Law Officers, does the Lord President think it proper that we should give House room to a civil servant whom Leon Brittan tells us behaved totally improperly in the matter of the Law Officer's letter—unless, that is, the Prime Minister on 27 January did something which, were I to name it, would lead to my being suspended for 20 days?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The hon. Gentleman is the only hon. Member who continues to have that particular obsession, although the House may be glad that it has replaced the Belgrano in his mind. I invite him to give up this obsession as decisively as he gave up the other.

Animal Feed (Lead Contamination)

3.31 pm

Dr. David Clark (South Shields) *(by private notice)*: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on lead in milk and meat following the discovery of lead in cattle feed.

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Gummer): A consignment of rice bran was contaminated during its transport from Burma. On its arrival in Belgium the unfit cargo was not destroyed, but sold on and reprocessed into animal feed. The Dutch embassy informed the Ministry's legal department on Wednesday 1 November of a specific consignment thought to be contaminated and delivered to two companies based in Teignmouth and Liverpool. By this time, our own veterinary investigation service had identified from its own investigations a connection between cattle deaths and lead contamination in animal feed.

As soon as my Department learned that contaminated animal feed had been distributed to farms in this country, it took urgent steps to trace the suppliers, merchants and compounders and used their customer lists to warn the farmers concerned. It stopped the movement from these farms of animals and foodstuffs which might have been affected and arranged with the Milk Marketing Board for the segregation of the milk. These voluntary arrangements were confirmed by order under part I of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985.

The European Commission was also contacted to request urgent investigation of the possibility that this incident was the result of criminal activities in another member state. Throughout all this we have worked closely with the Department of Health. It confirms that, on present evidence, even in the worst case of the maximum possible intake of lead and other metals from this incident, there has been no hazard to human health.

I pay tribute to the staff of the Ministry and the Milk Marketing Board, who have handled the massive task of dealing with the 1,500 or more farms concerned and who are now involved in the testing procedure through which we can continue to protect human health and begin to de-restrict farms. I am sure we all recognise the very severe effects that these strong measures have on the farmers involved. They have shown considerable co-operation and I am sure that they will realise that these restrictions must continue to be maintained as long as is necessary to safeguard the health of the public.

Dr. Clark: We on this side of the House approve of the Government's decision to impose restrictions. First, will the Minister explain why, having been alerted by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture on 1 November to the presence of the lead-contaminated cattle feed in Britain, he waited five days, until 6 November, before imposing restrictions? Why did the Minister not issue a precautionary notice to farmers warning them of the possibility of contamination and asking them to withhold the cattle feed, thus avoiding unnecessary cattle deaths and preventing potentially hazardous milk from entering the food chain?

Secondly, has the Minister seen the report in *The Sunday Times* that the Milk Marketing Board was not informed of the seriousness of the problem until 5 November—four days afterwards? Why was there that delay? Why did the Minister wait not five but 10 days before commencing the testing of meat for lead? As he knows, it is a potentially dangerous by-product.

I associate the Opposition with the sterling work done by the Ministry officials and the vets. Does the Minister recall informing me in a parliamentary answer that, in the past 10 years, the state veterinary service has been cut by 25 per cent? Will he now reverse that process as a first step to improving our ability to respond to food emergencies such as the one now on our hands?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that most hon. Members would feel that this subject should not be drawn into party political debate, and particularly by armchair critics. On the speed of response, I would prefer to listen to the views put forward by local people. One of the south-west regional chairmen of the National Farmers Union wrote to me yesterday. He said:

> "I congratulate you and your staff on the superb reaction to the crisis. I know that Ministry staff and NFU staff have worked all hours since the issue broke and that there has been close co-operation throughout".

That is a fairer statement of what happened.

It will immediately appear to all hon. Members that it would be impossible to ask all farmers to withhold their cattle feed. To suggest that all cattle feed should be withheld because a specific consignment of cattle feed——

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): The Minister said—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) should listen to what his party says. He obviously does not listen to what the Government say.

The most important thing to do was precisely what the Ministry did. It had specific information, it followed up that specific information as fast as was humanly possible, and it made sure that a good deal of the feed did not go out. Much of the rest was recovered, and the farmers were informed so that they did not move cattle or milk from their premises.

The hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) must accept that we brought in the Milk Marketing Board at the very point at which we were able to segregate the milk, which we did on Sunday; that was perfectly proper, and that was the order in which we should have done it. I know that the hon. Gentleman does not wish to mislead people, so I am quite happy for him to go through the details. The hon. Member for Workington always tries to make party political points out of these matters, and enjoys doing so, so I will not listen to him. His hon. Friend the Member for South Shields is a much more decent person and he knows the facts in these matters.

May I explain why we did not test meat earlier? We felt that it was necessary to do things in a proper order. The milk was obviously the biggest and most important matter. Once we had stopped material moving off the farms, it seemed that the first priority was to deal with that product which is in large quantities and which causes considerable storage problems. Therefore, the first thing to do was to test it. Of course, we could not allow any to leave the farms. One must have tests over a period before it is possible to declare that the milk is fit to go back into public supply.

On the testing of meat for lead, the first thing to do is to make sure that there is a proper test to cover not only lead but anything else that might be available, because lead is an impure metal. That is the order in which scientists

advised us to do it. We feel that that is the right order, and the farmers certainly feel that that is the right order. No animals are leaving the farms, so there can be no threat to public health. That is the right thing to do. I am surprised at the hon. Gentleman's argument because no one, apart from himself, thinks that that is the wong way to do it.

I gladly welcome what the hon. Gentleman said about the vets. One of the reasons they were able to do the job so well is because of the efficient reorganisation of the state veterinary service which has been carried out over the past 10 years.

Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop (Tiverton): May I say how glad I am that my right hon. Friend has twice visited the area concerned and, I believe, the Starcross veterinary inspection centre in my constituency, which has played a leading part in controlling this imported menace, rather than just sitting in his Department in London and waiting for other people to report to him? That is very much appreciated. May I ask him whether it is not possible to supply the actual figures to farmers who want to know the degree of lead contamination so that they and their general practitioners can make an informed judgment as to whether their families are at risk, who have been drinking the milk concerned?

Mr. Gummer: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments. I had hoped to make such a visit today—indeed, I was on the train today ready to make a further visit down to the south-west but had to return to the House to respond to this important question. I am sure that my hon. Friend will remind his farmers of the statement by the chief medical officer, who said clearly that there was no need for their families to be worried, on the evidence that we have. I do not want anybody to be worried in that way.

However, I have not made that my first priority. My first priority has been to test and to re-test where early tests show that the level of lead in the milk is low. That has enabled such milk to come back into the system, and we have so far allowed 10 farms to do that. The second priority is obviously to test those farms that have not been tested before.

Greater than either of those priorities would be circumstances in which the figures suggested a particular danger on a particular farm. However, there is no such evidence at the moment and those farmers need not be concerned. Without holding up the other testing arrangements, I am making arrangements so that, as soon as is practical, we can provide those figures for each farm. I shall, of course, ensure that the confidentiality of the figures will be as one would want; otherwise, the farmers might be less than happy.

Mr. Alan W. Williams (Carmarthen): Since the lead in the animal feed was present in sufficient concentration to cause the deaths of about 30 cattle, thousands of calves and cows must have sub-lethal concentrations of lead in their meat and bones. What will the Government do about that? Will they allow and pay for the slaughter of those lead-contaminated cattle to prevent that lead-contaminated beef from getting into the food chain?

Mr. Gummer: The Government will certainly prevent that material from getting into the food chain if there is any danger to the health of the public. That is first and foremost. We will make decisions about what we have to do when we have done the testing and know the extent of the problem and the issues involved. As the hon. Gentleman knows, there can be circumstances in which lead poisoning gradually diminishes, out of the animal altogether——

Mr. Williams: Very slowly.

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman may not know this, but it is the advice of the state veterinary service. That is what happens. I am in the business of using the scientific advice available to us as much as possible; and not of frightening people unnecessarily, while always warning them. On no occasion have any circumstances arisen in which the public has not had all the details, to such an extent that every test result given on all the milk during the past few days has been given out to the public so that people know exactly what is happening, and I shall continue to do that.

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the wild allegations by the Opposition Members on this issue show that they are the enemy not only of the food industry but of the farming industry also, and of all who work in them?

Mr. Gummer: It is important to say that the public's health comes before anything else. If I am unhappy about one or two of the wilder statements that have been made, it is simply because, by suggesting things that are not true, those doing so are worrying people in circumstances in which they need not be worried, and those who have worked so hard to protect the public may feel that they are being snubbed by some hon. Members.

Mr. Charles Kennedy (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): Given the existing pressures on farm incomes in many sectors of the agricultural community, does the Minister think that, as a result of this latest problem, the Government might take any steps to compensate those farmers who will incur financial loss as a result of the very necessary restrictions that his Department has sought to impose in this case? The Minister referred to the possibility of the involvement of some criminal organisation in Europe, and as there was press speculation over the weekend, perhaps completely unfair to the Minister, which said that that might have been a smokescreen, has the right hon. Gentleman received any further information from the Commission about its investigations?

Mr. Gummer: On the first question, I have been in touch with the National Farmers Union and I know that Sir Simon Gourlay takes exactly the same view as I have stated publicly—that this is a matter for the courts and not one for compensation. I want to help the farmers as much as possible and, through our legal department and with the NFU and others, I am trying to see how best this matter can be dealt with. We shall, of course, keep farmers in touch with what is happening in Holland and the rest of Europe.

I believe that the only press speculation to which the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) refers was a comment by the hon. Member for South Shields, the spokesman on agriculture for the Labour party. He suggested—I thought unfortunately, as the facts are exactly opposite—that there was a smokescreen. It is extremely difficult to believe that someone could accidentally turn into cattle feed a

[Mr. Gummer]

substance that was so badly contaminated that it was of a different colour from what it should have been. If that is the case, I cannot believe that it was done by, as someone suggested, a silly accident. That would take a great deal of believing.

From the court transcripts of the first case that has taken place in Holland, I understand that the firm that originally bought this feed and brought it into Antwerp has stated that, on no less than three occasions, it telexed the firm that had been paid to take the feed away and to destroy it to say that that feed was contaminated and had to be destroyed.

There is hardly a question mark as to whether the act was done criminally; the question is who did it, when, and how soon there will be a prosecution.

Several Hon. Members *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the House that this is an Opposition half day. I shall allow two more questions to be put from each side and then we must move on.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): My right hon. Friend will know that my constituency has been affected by the sales of the contaminated foodstuff. My constituents have asked me to pass on to my right hon. Friend their appreciation and thanks for the prompt action that he took and for the courtesy and thoroughness of his officials, with which I am glad to concur. We have a problem in south Derbyshire about contaminated meat. Will my right hon. Friend reassure us about how the carcases will be disposed of so that they cannot enter the human food chain inadvertently?

Mr. Gummer: Those animals that have died from lead poisoning and those that tests are likely to reveal have died from such poisoning will either be buried or incinerated. There is no question of that meat getting into the human food chain. I thank my hon. Friend for her kind words on this matter; she, of all people, knows how important it is.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the Minister agree with the policy adviser to the NFU who has said that there is already an established trade in contaminated feed? When the right hon. Gentleman says that I am being political, does he understand that I have sat here on four occasions in recent years and today, when we discussed Chernobyl, bovine spongiform encephalopathy and listeria, and have witnessed clear delay from Departments when dealing with those matters? That was especially true of Chernobyl, when I was told at the Dispatch Box——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Keep to this statement, please.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Three years they waited.

Mr. Gummer: As the hon. Gentleman uses those three examples, which are not directly involved with this matter, he might know that we were the first Government to warn people about listeria. How that can be described as delay I do not know. As I understand it, we are still the only Government in western Europe who have warned people about that disease.

Our record stands supreme on Chernobyl. As I said to the hon. Gentleman before, I was happy for my wife, who was then carrying one of our children, to eat that lamb and I am still happy that I said that it was safe, because it was. I continue to believe that that is so. I have taken measures on BSE that are tougher than those recommended by scientists. No Government would have taken measures as tough as our own, because we put food safety first. The hon. Gentleman is wrong on those three examples, and he is wrong in this case. We take the view that feed should not be contaminated; that is why we have taken measures as tough as this. If the hon. Gentleman cared about food safety, instead of being interested only in party politics, he would be quiet a bit more often.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the speed with which his officials met the danger shows that there is absolutely no need for an independent body to be set up to consider food safety, and that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has discharged its responsibilities in an excellent way?

Mr. Gummer: I disagree with my hon. Friend, because I think that we are the independent body on food safety. That must be so, because our first and primary interest is the protection of the public. Nobody could have moved as fast as we were able to move except a Ministry which was responsible for both food and farming.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): What are the levels of lead in the British food chain? When does the Minister expect to get rid of those levels?

Mr. Gummer: I do not think the hon. Gentleman can have thought of his question before he got up to speak, because the average level of lead in the food chain is so small as not to be measurable. The question we are interested in is whether the level of lead at any part of the food chain is dangerous to public health. The Department of Health has made it clear that no one need have any worry on that account.

East Germany

3.51 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The implications of this weekend's events in East Germany for Britain's foreign and European policy."

I know that these are dull words, particularly when it has been a weekend of such extraordinary hope and excitement. To watch on one's television screens great engines tearing holes in the Berlin wall was for me an extraordinary experience. For me it was a wondrous sight to watch people flooding through the gaps where previously they would have feared a bullet in the back. We cannot let such an event pass and not respond to it.

I did my national service in Berlin long ago, before the wall was built. I have visited the city many times since and I identify—as we all should in this free Parliament—with what has been the most dramatic and marvellous demonstration of the power of free thought that we have seen since the war.

Yesterday, like most hon. Members—and like you Mr. Speaker—I marched in a Remembrance day parade. I remembered my father telling me about the bloody days in the trenches in Flanders. I recalled the doctor from the wee village on Skye in which I was brought up, whose job it was to attend Heinrich Himmler after his suicide. I remembered also my friends in Berlin and the troubles that they had had. I remembered that they were throwing off a new tyranny and that we were seeing the birth of an optimism that I—and I am sure many other hon. Members—have never known.

We all make banal speeches about historic moments but this is a real, tangible and marvellous historical moment and we should not let it pass. We should debate the matter and celebrate with our German friends the possibility of a new and far better future. That is my case.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The implications of this weekend's events in East Germany for Britain's foreign and European policy."

I do not in any way under-estimate the importance of what the hon. Gentleman has said or of the momentous events unfolding in Europe. However, as he knows, I have to decide whether his application comes within the terms of the Standing Order and, if so, whether a debate should be given priority over the business already set down for this evening or tomorrow. In this case, the matter he has raised does not meet the requirements of the Standing Order and I regret that I cannot submit his application to the House.

Points of Order

3.54 pm

Mr. Toby Marlow (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am looking for your assistance. At a time when the Berlin wall is being reduced to rubble, the iron curtain is melting before our eyes and the most momentous events for over 40 years are taking place in our continent, it appears that the Opposition believe that the most important action for the House to take is to debate events in Cambodia. Every newspaper and television channel in this country is debating these momentous events, yet we——

Mr. Speaker: Order. What is the point of order for me?

Mr. Marlow: The point of order for you, Mr. Speaker, is that we in this democratic assembly in the United Kingdom are being asked by the Opposition to debate events in Cambodia when the European Commission and everybody else in this country are debating the momentous events in eastern Europe, central Europe and our continent. I call upon you, Mr. Speaker, as a representative of this House, to use what influence you have to ensure that we debate the real and important issues which face the future of our continent and our country rather than faraway issues of half a continent away.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I can help the hon. Gentleman. I fully appreciate what he has said about the great importance of these events. There will, perhaps, be an opportunity to dwell on them in next Wednesday's debate on developments in the European Community.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to put this on record firmly and squarely, because what has just been said is a disgrace to your office. Would you confirm that, while the map of Europe is being redrawn this weekend—I concur wholly with what was said earlier by the representative of the Liberal party, the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston)—nevertheless, it is open to the Government to move to suspend the debate between 7 and 10 pm tonight? Therefore, instead of debating £500,000 of ratepayers' money which is to be spent on a road race Bill, we could debate the momentous events in eastern Europe.

Mr. Speaker: This is an Opposition day——

Mr. Rooker: Take off the Private business.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is a matter for the Chairman of Ways and Means who put it down.

Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your guidance on events which took place over the weekend. You may well have read a series of newspaper articles involving the brother of the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope that in this Chamber we do not need to involve individuals in arguments of that kind. This is unworthy of the hon. Gentleman.

Mr MacKay: Mr. Speaker, you have not heard me.

Mr. Speaker: I have not heard what the hon. Member has to say, but I can sense it.

Mr. MacKay: I hope that you, Mr. Speaker, are mistaken. I was going on to say that I thought that those articles were full of unworthy innuendoes towards the hon. Member for Bolsover. In order to clear his name, I sought your guidance as to whether the articles constituted a breach of privilege and should be referred to the Select Committee.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman alleges that, he should write to me in the usual way.

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Further to my point of order of Friday morning, Mr. Speaker, I wish to seek your guidance. As the champion of the rights of Back Benchers, for which you are justifiably revered, could you advise the House how it was possible for discussions to take place on the private business of this House—the Isle of Wight Bill—on the Adjournment of the House without involving me? The Social and Liberal Democrats were not present throughout the whole of that debate, despite the fact that they control the Isle of Wight county council. Could you say whether, if they had been present, they would have been entitled, as a minority party, to participate in the negotiations, and possibly have saved the Bill?

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not in any way responsible for what may go on in private discussions outside the Chamber. I share the hon. Gentleman's concern that a large number of private Bills are currently held up. In procedural terms, nothing out of order has taken place.

Mr. Bennett: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Can you confirm that a perfectly good report by the Joint Committee on Private Bill Procedure is before the House and that, if the House implemented it quickly, many problems to do with private business could be resolved?

Mr. Speaker: I can confirm that. I also heard—I hope the hon. Gentleman and the House heard it too—the Leader of the House say at business questions last Thursday that he intended to look into the matter urgently and would seek to deal with it.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the guardian of the liberties and privileges of the House, you have often made it clear that it is precisely because those privileges have been so long fought for that they should be used rarely and for good reason. I was therefore delighted by what you said earlier this afternoon, and I take it that when hon. Members, particularly the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), try to smear people outside the House under the power of privilege, you will call them up short. The point that my hon. Friend the Member for Berkshire, East (Mr. MacKay) made was fair——

Mr. Skinner: I do not use privilege for protection.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that the reputation of the House is in any way enhanced by drawing attention to matters of that kind.

Opposition Day

[2ND ALLOTTED DAY] [SECOND PART]

Cambodia

Mr. Speaker: I must announce that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

4.1 pm

Mr. Gerald Kaufman (Manchester, Gorton): I beg to move,

That this House records its profound concern at the continuing tragedy of Cambodia; calls on Her Majesty's Government not to sponsor any resolution at the United Nations which directly or indirectly gives support or comfort to the Khmer Rouge or its allies, and in the debate in the General Assembly on Wednesday to repudiate specifically Thiounn Prasith of the Khmer Rouge as delegate of Cambodia; insists that the Government provides clear answers to allegations that British military personnel have been providing training for forces fighting alongside Khmer Rouge forces, and ends forthwith any such training; believes that no aid other than humanitarian aid should be provided for any group or objective in Cambodia; and asks that such aid be increased substantially.

The intervention earlier by the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), who I notice has sloped off after making it, brought great discredit on him and on anyone who agreed with him. I am second to none in my praise for and excitement about what is taking place in East Germany and Berlin today. I was there yesterday and was able to see something of it for myself. But the tragedy of Cambodia, a country in which up to 2 million people were slaughtered in the most appalling way by a regime of profound inhumanity, is a matter which the House is right to debate—especially since, on Wednesday this week, the United Nations General Assembly is to debate Cambodia. The Opposition have used the time available to them so that the House can state its views on this agonising issue before the United Nations debate.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman is not saying that I was trying to change the debate on Cambodia—we could well have debated East Germany tomorrow.

Mr. Kaufman: I fully accept that. I know, from his presence here, that the hon. Gentleman cares about this issue.

Not only do we believe that two days before the United Nations debates Cambodia the House should discuss it, but we believe that the time has come for the United Kingdom Government to reassess and fundamentally to change their policy towards Cambodia. Throughout the world Cambodia has become a symbol of all that is most savage and unacceptable in the conduct of political relations and military activity; it is now a synonym for the depths of inhumanity to which those who wield power can descend in their maltreatment of the people whose lives they control.

The murder, torture and suppression of human rights and freedom associated with the name of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge can be compared in scale and horror only to Adolf Hitler's holocaust. It is easy for everyone, including the British Government, to say that the Khmer Rouge must never return to power in Cambodia, but

unless there is a total change in policy towards Cambodia by our Government and by other nations there is a real danger that the Khmer Rouge will return to power there. Those armies are dominated by the Khmer Rouge and are fighting their way into Cambodia. Unless they are halted, they may overturn the Government of Cambodia, the Government of Hun Sen.

The allegedly acceptable face of those armies is Prince Sihanouk, the perpetual prince over the water of Cambodia. The largest part of those armies belongs to the Khmer Rouge. Sihanouk's so-called Democratic Coalition is dominated by the Khmer Rouge. Last month *The Independent* said:

"All the CGDK declarations, including Prince Sihanouk's recent five-point peace plan, are written by the Khmer Rouge, and simply presented to Sihanouk and the KPNLF leader Son Sann, to sign."

The coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea—so-called—has as its diplomatic representatives people who in number and importance are dominated by the Khmer Rouge. For example, the so-called Foreign Minister of that coalition was Head of State during Pol Pot's rule in Cambodia.

The British Government are playing an active part in assisting the armies that are dominated by the Khmer Rouge and in seeking to remove from power in Cambodia the Hun Sen regime that is today that country's legal and de facto Government. The rationale of those policies is that Hun Sen was placed in power by Vietnamese forces. There is truth in that, but whatever may be said against the Vietnamese it must be said in their favour that they drove out Pol Pot. It must also be said that the removal of Pol Pot by the Vietnamese has counted less with the United States Administration than the fact that it was the Vietnamese who removed him.

Because Vietnam inflicted on the United States the most humiliating defeat on the battlefield that the Americans had ever suffered, United States policy has been dominated by the compulsion to oppose anything with which the Vietnamese are associated. That is a foolish and dangerous motivation to govern the foreign policy of any great power. It is especially regrettable in the case of the United States which, under President Bush, has in many areas made changes in foreign policy that are beneficial and admirable. One can cite the change in policy towards the middle east and in arming the Contras and the way in which the Americans are enhancing the Reagan initiatives in negotiation with the Soviet Union on nuclear disarmament. It is particularly regrettable that on this issue the Bush Administration are continuing the vindictive policies of the Reagan Administration towards Cambodia.

In the case of Cambodia, the United States motivation has led to a profoundly wrong policy, not only on the part of the Americans but by other countries. Taking into account the situation since the Tiananmen square massacre, it is deplorable and even ugly that the policy of the United States and that of China towards Cambodia should be the same. It is an unholy alliance because of the shared loathing by both countries of Vietnam.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): Has my right hon. Friend seen the absolutely amazing and excellent article by the former Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath)? It states:

"The main difference is that the Americans killed thousands of Cambodian civilians in their attempts to destroy North Vietnamese supply lines whereas the Vietnamese invasion ended the systematic murder of Cambodians by their own 'government'."

Mr. Kaufman: Yes, I have seen that article. I thought that it was an outstanding contribution to the discussion, and I am only sorry that the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), no doubt because of other pressing engagements, cannot be here to express the same sentiments.

That would be particularly valuable because while the United States and China are at one in opposing a sensible solution for Cambodia, other Governments have allowed themselves to be dragged along by the White House and the State Department. I am sorry to say that the British Government are one of those Governments.

The extent to which British Government policy is dictated by the State Department can best be gauged from a speech on Cambodia made in the House on 21 January last year by the former Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, the hon. Member for Enfield, North (Mr. Eggar). I reread that speech at the weekend. After nearly two years and in the light of changing events, I found it deeply obnoxious. Speaking of the Hun Sen regime, he said:

"Without the presence of massive Vietnamese forces, the regime simply would not exist."

The Vietnamese forces have been withdrawn from Cambodia and the regime still exists. The hon. Gentleman continued, in squalid and sneering language:

"We cannot accept that at this time we should give development assistance to a regime which depends for its very existence on Vietnamese occupying forces. We cannot allow Vietnam to bankroll its oppression of Cambodia with western aid."—[*Official Report*, 21 January 1988; Vol. 125, col. 1225.]

The Vietnamese forces are gone, but for Cambodia there is still no British development assistance and still no western aid. To justify this, the Government have now changed their rationale. Last month, the Minister for Overseas Development said:

"We remain convinced that our policy of not offering direct Government to Government aid to the Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh is right in present circumstances. We have no wish to sustain an unrepresentative regime spawned by the illegal Vietnemese occupation."

Once again, Vietnam, rather than the needs and the plight of Cambodia, is dominating Government policy.

Let us be clear. The suffering people of Cambodia are being punished for the American defeat in Vietnam. Led by the United States, with Britain as a compliant follower, the world community has blacklisted Cambodia. The result for that poverty-stricken land has been not only terrible suffering but a reverse in the progress that was being made in combating disease and deprivation. Children are dying in Cambodia from diarrhoea and other diseases in terrifying numbers. They die, among other reasons, because of the dreadful state of the water supply. Aid could help to improve the water supply yet, inexcusably, Cambodia is the only country in the world to be denied United Nations development aid.

In a recent leading article, *The Times* said:

"Now that that invasion"——

the Vietnamese invasion—

"is at an end—so long as it is not perpetuated by proxy—there is no reason why generous aid for humanitarian projects or to assist Vietnam's incipient economic reform should not begin."

The Times is right in its argument, but mistaken in its conclusion, because there is, unfortunately, a valid reason why such aid is not provided by the United Nations. It is

[Mr. Kaufman]

because Cambodia is represented at the United Nations not by the Government who hold power but by the exiled opposition, the so-called coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. The United Nations delegate of that bogus organisation, Thiounn Prasith, was a close adviser of Pol Pot during his years in Government, and is still a crony of Pol Pot's.

An avowed representative of the Khmer Rouge has been put into the United Nations by other countries as the representative of Cambodia, when he does not represent Cambodia at all. His presence at the United Nations misrepresents Cambodia but gives an international validity to the Khmer Rouge and allows it to influence United Nations policy and international attitudes to Cambodia.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, in addition to his being a member of the Khmer Rouge, three of Thiounn Prasith's brothers held three of the 10 posts in the Pol Pot regime's Government between 1975 and 1979? That family above all is connected with what happened at that time.

Mr. Kaufman: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for placing that on the record. He, like others of my right hon. and hon. Friends, has a long, honourable and constructive record of fighting on this issue.

In a curious and opaque written answer to a question tabled by the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) last week, the Foreign Secretary—the right hon. Gentleman has explained to me why he cannot be here today—stated:

"The report of the UN credentials committee again recommended acceptance of credentials of Democratic Kampuchea for the Cambodian seat and was approved without a vote."—[*Official Report*, 8 November 1989; Vol. 159, c. *645*.]

The Foreign Secretary did not explain why there was no vote. He did not explain why the British Government did not vote against the seating of a Pol Pot crony as a representative of Cambodia at the United Nations. I regret to say that the Government have an odd and equivocal attitude towards the Khmer Rouge. The Prime Minister and others assert that they never wish to see Pol Pot back in power in Cambodia, but it is deplorable that the Government are shifting in their attitude towards the Khmer Rouge.

Last year, during a television interview, the Prime Minister was asked about the Khmer Rouge. The right hon. Lady stated:

"There is a much more reasonable grouping within the Khmer Rouge."

When asked to amplify that statement, she said:

"That is what I am assured by people who know, so that you will find that the more reasonable ones in the Khmer Rouge will have to play some part in a future Government."

It is a matter for concern to us all to discover who these "reasonable" ones in the Khmer Rouge, as cited by the Prime Minister, may be.

In a television programme two weeks ago—a programme which produced an enormous response from the public, as every hon. Member knows from his or her postbag—John Pilger tried to find the answer to the question that must follow the Prime Minister's statement. He put the question to the responsible Minister from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lord Brabazon of Tara. In a singular and bizarre interview, Lord Brabazon replied,

"I don't know their names."

He continued:

"Well, there are obviously some more reasonable than others."

He could not say who they are. All the same, the Government continued to recommend that the Khmer Rouge should be included in the Cambodian Government.

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office briefing document reads:

"To exclude the Khmer Rouge completely from the transitional process could have the effect that we all want to avoid. It might drive their still powerful army into guerrrilla warfare."

Where are these people living? The "still powerful army" of the Khmer Rouge is involved in guerrilla warfare. It is involved in the invasion of Cambodia from Thailand. It dominates the armies that are invading Cambodia. The Government continue to say, however, that the Khmer Rouge should be part of Cambodia's Government.

Mr. Alexander Eadie (Midlothian): My right hon. Friend presents a powerful indictment of the Government. Does he recall that last week I asked the Prime Minister whether she felt happy that the Foreign Secretary was sitting next to Pol Pot representatives, and that the right hon. Lady refused to answer?

Mr. Kaufman: I well recall that intervention by my hon. Friend, because I thought that the Prime Minister would try to respond to the valid and important point he raised. But instead, she made a cheap joke which demonstrated once again, as did the intervention by the hon. Member for Northampton, North before today's debate began, that the killing, suffering, ordeal and plight of Cambodia matter little to some members of the Government and to the Conservative party.

The latest pronouncement on the subject was made on 1 November by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the hon. Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave), who I understand is to speak next, when he replied to an Adjournment debate initiated by the hon. Member for Broxtowe. In that notorious speech, the Minister announced:

"I have only two minutes to devote to Cambodia."

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): Before this becomes a legend—the hon. Member for Cynon Valley, (Mrs. Clwyd) will remember this—the right hon. Gentleman will recall that there are 30 minutes for Adjournment debates. My hon. Friend the member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) spoke for his full time and then there was an intervention from the hon. Member for Cynon Valley leaving me only four minutes in which to reply.

Mr. Kaufman: I read the debate in full. I recognise that the Minister had little enough time to reply, but instead of reading from his brief, he might have rejigged his speech to deal with what is a paramount issue in the House.

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): It is very unfair for the right hon. Gentleman to charge my hon. Friend the Minister with any discourtesy. He tried enormously hard in a very short time to fulfil his requirement. My hon. Friend had flown in from Washington the night before. In those circumstances, the hon. Member for Cynon Valley

(Mrs. Clwyd) and I felt that it was more important to get on record our concerns than to get a reply which I hope we shall get today.

Mr. Kaufman: Obviously I accept what the hon. Gentleman says, but I quote what the Minister said in the two minutes that he was able to devote to the subject. He said:

"Absorption of some part of the Khmer Rouge movement might diminish the power of the rest of the movement".

He went on to advocate

"the attempt to include some part of the Khmer Rouge movement—but not the Pol Pot supporters—in a future Government."—[*Official Report*, 1 November 1989; Vol. 159, c. 444.]

So in his two minutes the Minister managed to cram in a recommendation that the Khmer Rouge should be part of the Cambodian Government.

What it all comes back to is that the Government, without the Prime Minister or any other Minister being able to specify or name those reasonable members of the Khmer Rouge, are ready to advocate Khmer Rouge membership of a Cambodian Government. Let us be clear that their objective is to get rid of the present Cambodian Government. Their explanation is simple—they claim that that Government are in power only because they are propped up by Vietnamese forces. There are no Vietnamese troops in Cambodia, yet there are Khmer Rouge troops, who the Foreign and Commonwealth Office readily admits are a powerful army and whose flag flies at the United Nations because no country opposes the Khmer Rouge delegate there and because each year Britain and other countries support the continued efforts of the Khmer Rouge and its allies to take over power in Cambodia.

In a speech in the House last year, the hon. Member for Enfield, North described the Government's stance as

"a ringing endorsement of the rights of the Cambodian people."—[*Official Report*, 21 January 1988; Vol. 125, c. 1225.]

That was his description of the United Nations' annual debate on Cambodia, but every year the United Nations once again endorsed the Khmer Rouge representative as the alleged representative of Cambodia.

If *Jane's Defence Weekly* is anything to go by, another ringing endorsement of the rights of the Cambodian people by the Government is the provision of training by British forces for troops fighting alongside the Khmer Rouge to overturn the present Government of Cambodia. *Jane's Defence Weekly* says that that has been going on for four years. When the Prime Minister and the deputy Prime Minister were asked about that on Thursday 2 November in the House of Commons, they dodged the question eight times. The deputy Prime Minister said that it was not the practice to give details of training by British special forces of foreign troops.

The Government cannot hide behind that formula any longer. Only last year, the Prime Minister boasted about British forces training Zimbabwean troops. On 19 July, she said that such training was "greatly appreciated." If that information can be given about training Zimbabwean troops, it must be given about training Cambodian troops. Unless the Minister states unequivocally this afternoon that British service men have not been training Cambodian forces, we shall take it, by his silence or lack of response, that those authoritative allegations are true. We shall have to proceed in the knowledge that the Government are taking positive steps to subvert by force the present regime in Cambodia by assisting fighting men who are part of an army dominated by what the Foreign and Commonwealth Office calls the

"powerful army of the Khmer Rouge."

As the *Financial Times* stated recently in a leading article,

"the Khmer Rouge remains a force to be reckoned with in Cambodia—and one even given a kind of legitimacy by Western Governments."

The Government provide that legitimacy by training troops allied to the Khmer Rouge and by co-sponsoring at the United Nations a resolution which, unless it is changed radically as a result of the Foreign Secretary's announcement last week, speaks of the

"continued and effective struggle of the Kampuchean forces under the leadership of Samdech Norodom Sihanouk to achieve the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and neutral and non-aligned status of Kampuchea."

That is to be attained by legitimising forces dominated by the Khmer Rouge.

As *The Times* stated in a leading article this month,

"power sharing is simply not in the Khmer Rouge vocabulary, except as a back door route to ultimate and absolute control."

The Government are conniving in the ultimate and absolute control of Cambodia by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge.

The Labour party advocates a complete change of policy by the British Government. We believe that they should not continue to co-sponsor the resolution that is before the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday. I have been notified of a change to the draft resolution. The great alteration that the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs announced to the House in answer to the hon. Member for Broxtowe amounts to the changing of two or three odd words. The phrase

"continued and effective struggle of the Kampuchean forces"

is changed to

"the continued and effective struggle of the Kampuchean people."

What is that cosmetic alteration meant to prove? What struggle is there against the present Cambodian Government other than the armed struggle by the Khmer Rouge? It is a piece of sophistry by the Government to believe that, by changing that word, or one or two others, in the resolution, they can delude us into believing that they are changing their policy.

The Government should abandon their sponsorship of that resolution. I understand that the Swedish Government have done so, and I hope that other Governments are considering doing so.

What is more, we believe that the British Government's support should be withdrawn from the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and from Prince Sihanouk unless he repudiates any connection with the Khmer Rouge and rids his so-called coalition of the Khmer Rouge. We believe, with *The Times*, that the Government should consider recognising the Hun Sen Government. On 2 November, *The Times* said:

"There is a case for shortcircuiting the niceties of diplomacy, and recognising the Phnom Penh regime without waiting for a comprehensive political solution. Mr. Hun Sen's government is not a pleasant one. It holds political prisoners and has little time for free speech and multi party-politics. But it has begun religious and economic reforms, encouraging private businesses and allowing farmers to own their land. It has adopted a policy of non-alignment, and it would no longer be accurate to dismiss Mr. Hun Sen as Hanoi's puppet."

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup made precisely the same point in his important article in *The*

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Guardian today. It is about time that the Government stopped being a victim of the United States' delusion about Vietnam and acted for themselves properly and sensibly on this issue.

We believe that, from the starting point of recognition today of the existing Government in Phnom Penh, Britain should end its part in the inexcusable aid boycott of Cambodia. There is reason to believe that, despite the Foreign Secretary's claim last week in answer to the hon. Member for Broxtowe—

"We stipulate that none of our aid should reach the Khmer Rouge."—[*Official Report*, 8 November 1989, Vol. 159, c. 645.]—

such aid as is at present intended for Cambodians living in the camps along the Thai-Cambodian border may get into the hands of the Khmer Rouge. The Foreign Secretary announced in his answer that there would be some direct aid to Cambodia, but we believe that British aid for Cambodia should be substantially increased and should go into Cambodia on a large scale to alleviate the terrible suffering of the people of that country. What the Foreign Secretary offered last week is completely inadequate to meet the scale of the need. Once again, it is governed by an obsession with the nature of the Government in Phnom Penh compared with that which is to replace them, and which the Government are assisting.

Mr. Julian Amery (Brighton, Pavilion): In an otherwise powerful speech, which I very much respect, the right hon. Gentleman has not yet touched on the Paris conference, where all these matters were discussed at great length, nor has he attempted to say where responsibility lies for the failure of that conference.

Mr. Kaufman: As the right hon. Gentleman properly points out, the Paris conference was a failure. It was a failure because many of the main parties to it started from the clear assumption that they could not accept the Government in Phnom Penh and somehow had to get involved with the ragbag coalition behind Prince Sihanouk. Until we move away from that posture, which is invalid and unacceptable, there will be no progress towards settlement in Cambodia.

We believe that the Government should start the process which we have recommended the day after tomorrow in New York, when the United Nations debates Cambodia. The Government cannot attempt to convince anybody in the House who has studied these matters carefully that the cosmetic alteration to the resolution will begin to meet the needs of the situation. The Government should even now challenge the presence at the United Nations of the Khmer Rouge delegate. It is open to them to do so if they wish. They can, if they wish, call for a vote on the seating of the Cambodian delegate. They can, if they wish, demand that any resolution that they co-sponsor should call for the seating of the Khmer Rouge representative to be reviewed in the light of the Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia.

The Times, in its leading article on 2 November, said that, directly and indirectly, the British Government, with other Governments, were helping to make possible the return to power in Cambodia of the Khmer Rouge. It pointed out:

"The Khmer Rouge when in power depopulated the towns, and systematically starved and murdered thier countrymen. The absolute priority is to deprive them of a second opportunity."

Let us make no mistake: any country that directly or indirectly helps to make possible the return of the Khmer Rouge to power in Cambodia is colluding in a repetition of the atrocities in Cambodia which have added new words to the world's political dictionary and which are branded on the minds and consciences of millions throughout the world, including many British people. We speak this evening for those millions in urging a change of British Government policy on Cambodia. If the Minister does not announce such a change, we shall tonight not only speak for the millions who care, but register our votes for them.

4.35 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. William Waldegrave): I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

'welcomes the Government's consistent refusal to give support to either the PRK or the murderous Khmer Rouge; commends its commitment to finding a peaceful and comprehensive settlement endorsed by the Cambodian people; and welcomes the increased assistance which the Government is providing for the innocent victims of this tragic conflict.'.

The speech of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) was eloquent, and no one doubts the genuine care and passion that have gone into it.

I genuinely welcome this debate, because this is a difficult and important subject. It is a welcome opportunity to describe in detail the consistency of British Government policy, both under the present and the preceding Labour Administrations, in condemning the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978, in refusing to have dealings with the Phnom Penh regime or to support the Khmer Rouge in any way and in a steady commitment to a sovereign, independent, neutral Cambodia, with the Cambodian people deciding their own future through free and fair elections.

We are witnessing the collapse of worldwide Communism. Regional conflicts, such as Cambodia and Afghanistan, should be soluble on the basis that the long-suffering people themselves decide under which form of government they want to live. That is our policy, and doubtless that of the Opposition as well.

The Opposition motion concentrates heavily and rightly on the paramount need——

Mr. Heffer: Will the Minster give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman, but I then want to develop my argument.

Mr. Heffer: This is an important point. The Minister said that the Government had never given support to the Khmer Rouge, but have the Government ever challenged the credentials of those who sit in the United Nations and who are known to be Khmer Rouge?

Mr. Waldegrave: I shall come to that very point in the central part of my speech, so I ask the hon. Gentlemen to be patient for a short time.

If the motion had said simply that it was intolerable to support the Khmer Rouge, there would have been no

problem about accepting it. Let us be clear at the outset that the Khmer Rouge is a particularly evil mutation of Communism and Pol Pot a particularly evil man.

The Khmer Rouge was helped to power in 1975 by the then North Vietnam. From 1975 to 1978, the Vietnamese leadership repeatedly praised the Khmer Rouge and its "precious assistance to the revolutionary cause", and attacked the West and the United States for slandering the regime. That was done while mass murder was being committed. Also during that terrible period, there were those in the West who chose to be silent about what was going on inside Cambodia and who denounced atrocity reports as American fabrications, aimed at ex post facto justification of United States involvement in the Vietnam war. One such was the ineffable Professor Noam Chomsky. Such people, including journalists, are not well placed to lead moral crusades, least of all against the West, when it might stimulate us to look back at what they were writing at the time.

The attitude of the then Labour Government to the murderous Pol Pot regime was stated by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr. Evan Luard, on 30 March 1977 in reply to a Conservative Member's request that the large-scale slaughter in Cambodia should be raised in the Security Council. Mr. Luard replied:

"With regard to Cambodia, however much we may deplore the situation there, it is clear that this is primarily a domestic matter, and, therefore, not a matter for the United Nations."—[*Official Report*, 30 March 1977: Vol. 929, c. 379.]

Nevertheless, that attitude, happily, soon changed. In 1978, the British Government took the lead in raising the situation in Cambodia at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and called for an inquiry.

At the end of 1978, following an increasingly anti-Vietnamese line by the Pol Pot regime, the Vietnamese invaded. The Soviet Union vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cambodia in the wake of that invasion.

Mr. Mullin: The Minister missed out a small matter in his history of the conflict. The Vietnamese invasion was not unprovoked. It followed attacks by Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge on border provinces, in which perhaps 20,000 men, women and children were horribly butchered. There were similar attacks on and around the border of Thailand, but we choose to forget that. In addition, several hundred thousand refugees fled Cambodia under the Pol Pot regime, so terrible was life there. Whether the Vietnamese invasion was right or wrong, we should not ignore the reasons for it.

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman is perfectly right. Perhaps I made an understatement when I said that the Khmer Rouge took an increasingly anti-Vietnamese line. There were serious attacks by the Khmer Rouge on Vietnam.

When the people's army of Vietnam had overrun the country, its tanks were only a matter of hours from Bangkok. Naturally, Thailand and its friends and allies were alarmed. As I am sure the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) will agree—indeed, he has just confirmed it—the Vietnamese invaded for strategic reasons. As Thailand's Foreign Minister, Nguyen Co Thach, later told Congressman Solarz:

"Human rights was not a question; that was their problem . . . We were concerned only with security."

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr. Evan Luard, stated on 21 March 1979:

"I do not think that two wrongs make a right. Therefore, however bad the human rights situation was in Cambodia, I do not think that it excuses an almost equally bad situation in Vietnam. It does not excuse an attack by Vietnam on Cambodia."—[*Official Report*, 21 March 1979; Vol. 964, c. 1479.]

The Minister of State, Lord Goronwy-Roberts, referred to "one dictatorship imposed upon another."—[*Official Report*, House of Lords, 14 February, 1979, Vol. 398 c. 1385.]

At the same time, the Government decided to terminate most aid to Vietnam, Mr. Luard stated:

"since 1978 Vietnamese policies on human rights, over the exodus of boat refugees and in relation to Cambodia have caused us increasing concern . . . Because of our concern about recent developments in Vietnamese policy we have cancelled most of this aid."—[*Official Report*, 21 March 1979; Vol. 964, c. 1478.]—

that is, bilateral aid. We continued the same policy. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister confirmed that on 3 July 1979, when she stated:

"There will be no more aid to Vietnam so long as the present circumstances continue."—[*Official Report*, 3 July 1979; Vol. 969, c. 1117.]

The hon. Member for Sunderland, South raised the often misunderstood question of the recognition of Governments and of credentials. Since 1980, Britain has recognised states, not Governments. One advantage of that is that we do not have to judge between competing claimants in circumstances of civil war or conflict. But in 1979, the position was different. Our criterion then for recognition of a Government was whether or not it had effective control over the greater part of the country. That was not a moral criterion, simply a descriptive criterion, and it led us to abandon recognition of the Khmer Rouge Government in 1979.

As we now recognise states, not Governments, our only judgment is whether there is a Government within a country with which we are able to deal. Obviously the extent of that Government's ability of themselves to control their territory, will be one consideration. So will the assessment of British interests. At present, we recognise no Government in Cambodia.

There is also the separate issue of Cambodian credentials at the United Nations, which is mentioned in the motion. It is clear that the credentials committee could find no technical or legal reason for debarring the Cambodian delegation from this year's General Assembly. It is equally clear that, if there had been a vote in the General Assembly, the so-called coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea would have won it overwhelmingly. This has not, therefore, been the most profitable pressure point on which to concentrate.

As I have said, neither our recognition of the reality of the situation, nor any other action of ours implies recognition of the coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea or any other party as the legitimate Government in Cambodia. A dispute over credentials might also have split the unity of the Association of South-East Asian Nations which we hoped would be the principal vehicle for diplomatic progress towards a settlement in Cambodia.

We are adopting our stance at the United Nations. We have taken action with our friends and partners to modify the draft resolution which we, with 74 other member states, are co-sponsoring at the United Nations General Assembly in the debate on 15 November. The changes are

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intended to make it clear that the situation in Cambodia has altered and that we do not support the Khmer Rouge in any way. They have been welcomed by Hanoi.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I am aware that these are difficult diplomatic issues. Does the Minister accept that to object to the credentials of the Government of Kampuchea presently represented at the United Nations would at least facilitate a debate on the matter, but would not necessarily precipitate a vote, with the adverse results that he anticipates?

Mr. Waldegrave: All the expert advice from our mission to the United Nations is that such a move would be wrong.

As I said, the main thrust of British-Cambodian policy was laid down during the 1978-79 period and has been consistent ever since.

Mr. Pat Wall (Bradford, North): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Waldegrave: No. If I continue to give way, there will be no time for anyone else to speak in the debate.

Our policy has been to secure the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from the country which they invaded and to allow the Cambodian people themselves to decide their own government. It seeks to prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge to power and to avoid providing legitimacy for a regime of former Khmer Rouge officers, originally imposed by Vietnamese bayonets. Since Vietnam has withdrawn its combat units, our policy has had some success, although the need for self-determination for Cambodia and for arrangements which prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge remain as strong as ever.

Despite regular condemnation by the international community at the United Nations over the past decade, it was not until this September that Vietnam finally decided to withdraw its combat units. We believe that this represents another result of Mr. Gorbachev's pragmatic and positive foreign policy. On 5 April 1989, in a tripartite declaration with Laos and the Phnom Penh regime, the Vietnamese Government announced their intention to withdraw their troops unconditionally by the end of September, while asserting the right to return if the need arises.

That announcement led to the courageous decision of the French Government to convene an international conference in Paris in August. The purpose was to put in place a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the problem, including an international control mechanism, before Vietnamese troops withdrew at the end of September. It was hoped that the withdrawal would then be internationally monitored.

The conference was a race against the Vietnamese deadline. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the noble Lord Brabazon participated in that conference, which made a good start. French and Indonesian diplomacy persuaded all four Cambodian factions—that is, the Phnom Penh regime, the two non-Communist factions, and the Khmer Rouge—to sit down together at the same negotiating table behind one plaque entitled "Cambodia". That that was possible at all was also in large measure due to the efforts of Prince Sihanouk, still the only person in a position to claim widespread allegiance in Cambodia.

The Paris conference decided that the objective should be a comprehensive settlement. It therefore set up three working committees. The first was on a ceasefire and the operation of an effective international control mechanism to supervise and control the comprehensive implementation of a settlement. The second was to define the commitments of participating states to guarantee the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and neutrality of Cambodia, to ensure the cessation and non-recurrence of all foreign interference and external arms supplies and to prevent the recurrence of genocidal policies and practices—the return of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge—and the return of foreign interference—Vietnamese re-invasion.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): What evidence is there that, to use the Minister's words, Prince Sihanouk was the only person with widespread influence in Cambodia? Some of us who were there a long time ago doubted it then, and there is every reason to doubt it now.

Mr. Waldegrave: The phrase that I used was "widespread allegiance". The best evidence to give—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asked a question, and perhaps he would like to hear the answer. The best evidence is to be found in the steps that led to the creation of that joint delegation in Paris. I do not believe that that would have come about without Prince Sihanouk's intervention, which showed that he still carries considerable influence. I can understand the hon. Gentleman's scepticism, but Prince Sihanouk is perhaps the best there is.

The Paris conference decided that the objective should be a comprehensive settlement. The third of the three committees was to define the conditions that would enable refugees and displaced persons to return home if they so desired and to prepare the main elements of an international plan for the reconstruction of Cambodia. All those elements are necessary if settlement is to be truly comprehensive and not partial. Most encouraging of all was the agreement to create an ad hoc committee to examine questions concerning the implementation of national reconciliation and the setting up of a quadripartite interim authority under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk, with responsibility for organising internationally supervised free elections within a reasonable period.

I draw the attention of the House to the crucial fact that the Foreign Ministers of all the participating nations, including Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union, as well as the United States and the ASEAN countries, agreed that the interim authority should be quadripartite—that is to say that it should include all four factions, including representatives of the Khmer Rouge and the former Khmer Rouge who constitute the Heng Samrin regime.

The basis for that general agreement—this is the heart of the Opposition's disagreement with our policy, although it is not an illogical policy and it is certainly not a dishonourable policy—was the judgment that, if a protracted civil war is to be avoided and if the settlement is to be durable, it would be better to include all the factions in the interim authority, rather than exclude the Khmer Rouge and risk its return to guerrilla warfare in the jungle.

Mr. Kaufman: If the Government want to avoid a protracted civil war in Cambodia, why are they providing special forces training to one of the participants in that war?

Mr. Waldegrave: As the right hon. Gentleman knows, I will give no answer—any more than my right hon. Friends did. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"]

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, then the Foreign Secretary, made it clear that the composition of the transitional arrangements was primarily a matter for the Cambodian leader to decide.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister has been asked a question of fact. Does he not have an obligation to the House to answer a question of fact?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): That is not a matter over which I have any authority. Ministers and hon. Members must be responsible for their own statements and speeches.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are talking about taxpayers' money. Surely the Minister cannot deny that that money is being used to fund the murderous Pol Pot.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can you tell us whether the Minister's statement will preclude hon. Members from tabling further questions on the matter? Am I right in thinking that it will not preclude the Minister's appearing in front of the relevant Select Committee to answer—or not answer—similar questions?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I do not have responsibility for the conduct of Select Committees. The hon. Gentleman asked about questions. Nothing that is said in a debate of itself precludes the tabling of questions, although other criteria may well influence it.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I thought that I had made it clear that this is not a point of order for me. I remind the House that there are a number of hon. Members waiting to take part in this brief debate.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): The Minister said that he could not answer, but he answered a similar question on Zimbabwe. Will he withdraw his remarks and say not, "I cannot answer," but, "I refuse to answer"?

Mr. Waldegrave: The hon. Gentleman inadvertently makes my point for me, because there have been no special forces ever involved in Zimbabwe.

Mr. Kaufman: So what the hon. Gentleman is saying is that there are special forces involved. If there were not special forces involved, he would be able to answer the question about military training.

Mr. Waldegrave: The right hon. Gentleman, with his slightly schoolboyish debating skills, tries to make a bogus point. The military training for the Zimbabwe army is not special forces training. We do plenty of open military training for friendly countries around the world. We have never ever commented on the role of the special forces —either to say yes or to say no—and that remains the position just as it has been the position of Labour Governments.

My right hon. Friend the then Foreign Secretary made it clear that the composition of the transitional arrangements was primarily a matter for the Cambodian leaders to decide. But, he added, the international community

"has a duty to ensure that Cambodia is never again subjected to the degradation of the Pol Pot era. Through their action between 1975 and 1978, the Khmer Rouge must surely have forfeited any right to regain power."

The opening ministerial conference also agreed to send a United Nations fact finding team to establish whether a United Nations monitoring force could be deployed. It reported that this should be feasible, thus demonstrating that United Nations auspices could be established for a settlement, even though this issue too proved a major obstacle to agreement.

It is a source of profound regret that, despite these hopeful beginnings, one month later, when the second ministerial conference reconvened, the four Cambodian factions were further apart than they had been at the beginning. In particular, the Phnom Penh regime was not prepared to share power with the external Cambodian resistance in the transitional period before elections. Its position had hardened.

The attempt at national reconciliation therefore foundered and a return to the battlefield became inevitable. It seemed that, once Vietnam decided that a partial solution was not on—that is to say, international credit for troop withdrawal but no more—it lost interest in the proceedings. Those countries directly concerned must bear a heavy responsibility for the failure, and I have in mind the leaderships in Phnom Penh and Hanoi as well as in Peking. It is their consciences which should be under the spotlight; they are the centrally involved countries.

Agreement could have been possible if all concerned had shown the necessary flexibility. Up to the last moment, the French and Indonesian co-chairmen worked tirelessly for a political breakthrough. But it never came.

Even now, we refuse to renounce the hope that it will be possible to reconvene the Paris conference where so much useful work was done. We stand ready to play our part, for example, by participating in realistic international guarantees, if and when the conference is able to resume. It would, we are convinced, be a mistake at this juncture to abandon hope of a comprehensive and durable settlement, which we firmly believe to be the best way of keeping out the Khmer Rouge. That is why we continue to support that objective, as set out in the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the situation in Cambodia, which we shall co-sponsor.

Vietnam announced the final withdrawal of its forces from Cambodia on 26 September. Despite the absence of international verification, as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said on 8 November, we accept that their combat units have been withdrawn, and we have reviewed the implementation of our objectives in light of these events.

I remind the House what my right hon. Friend said because in large measure it anticipates the Opposition motion over the United Nations and over humanitarian aid. He announced that we shall build up our humanitarian aid programme. We shall continue to provide substantial help to the many thousands of

[Mr. Waldegrave]

Cambodians living in camps along the Thai-Cambodia border who have been made homeless by the years of fighting. We stipulate that none of our aid should reach the Khmer Rouge.

We shall now increase the humanitarian aid that we give inside Cambodia, while continuing to channel aid through non-governmental organisations and organisations such as UNICEF, and not direct to the Phnom Penh regime. As part of the policy, we propose to offer now a further contribution of £250,000 to UNICEF for humanitarian projects inside Cambodia. Arrangements will be made for a member of the British embassy in Bangkok to visit Phnom Penh soon to report on the situation at first hand. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will meet the heads of the non-governmental organisations tomorrow to discuss details. As I have already said, we have taken action to adapt our stance at the United Nations.

I should like to say a word about our policy towards Vietnam, which bears a heavy responsibility for the Cambodian tragedy. As I explained at the beginning, in 1979 the decision to cut off British aid was related to Vietnam's policies on human rights, the exodus of boat people and the Cambodian invasion.

In recognition of Vietnam's role, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer made it clear in Paris that "we look to the Vietnamese Government to live up to its wider responsibilities—towards Cambodia, towards its neighbours and towards its own people. Only in these new circumstances is my Government prepared to consider contributing to programmes of assistance to help Vietnam."

The withdrawal of Vietnamese combat units from Cambodia is an important and welcome step. In the context of a comprehensive settlement, it could indeed be a decisive step towards Vietnam's international rehabilitation. But for that we need a negotiated settlement, not a trial of strength on the battlefield.

We also accept that the human rights situation in Vietnam has improved, despite the cold-war rhetoric of the seventh party plenum, with its outdated references to "capitalist encirclement". It is surely evidence of Vietnam's improved performance in that area that the screening of boat people in Hong Kong reveals that the vast bulk are not fleeing persecution, but simply seeking a better economic life. In one sense, that is encouraging.

But we still look to Vietnam to state clearly and unequivocally that it is prepared to accept back in safety and dignity all those who are screened out, in accordance with the responsibilities of states towards their own people. We welcome Vietnam's co-operation over the return of volunteers, 500 of whom have now gone back.

We will go on working with our friends and partners for a sovereign and independent Cambodia whose people are free to decide their own future. That remains the overriding priority. We have never given, and will never give, support of any kind to the Khmer Rouge.

There are new diplomatic ideas coming forward, for resuming the Paris conference, for a step-by-step approach, as proposed by the Thai Prime Minister, for an interim United Nations authority, as suggested by Congressman Solarz. We are considering these carefully, in the context of the forthcoming United Nations general asembly debate and its aftermath. A return to the negotiating table is becoming increasingly urgent.

We wish to see peace and stability restored to Cambodia through a comprehensive political settlement which will create the conditions in which the Cambodian people can elect a Government of their choice, free from the fear of Khmer Rouge atrocities, foreign occupation or civil war. In consultation with our friends and allies, notably the ASEAN group of countries, we will continue to work to this end.

I do not believe that the Cambodian people would willingly choose either the murderous Khmer Rouge or the ex-Khmer Rouge which constitute the present regime in Phnom-Penh. What we need are free and fair elections to decide. Our diplomacy will be directed towards bringing them about.

5.2 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): This afternoon, the Minister appeared to be a decent, fair-minded man who was landed with an awful brief. It may well be, as his historical chronology showed, that there is some continuity between this Government and the Labour Government of the 1970s, but none of his comments were any more relevant than that. I was saddened as I listened to him plough grimly through his speech, and I suspect that he was a bit sad himself—not least when he was struggling with questions about military training which were obviously right on the button. It must have been a very bad day for the Minister.

This is a most appropriate time to have this debate. We are debating the subject not just because of the situation in Cambodia, but because of the hard work of Oxfam, the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development and Christian Aid and because of John Pilger's television programme which had a tremendous effect on so many people and resulted in a remarkable number of people writing to hon. Members and to the Foreign Office.

I commend the Labour party for having this debate today. As my hon. Friend the Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) said during business questions last Thursday, we are very much at one with the Labour party on this issue. I commend the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) on his speech.

As the right hon. Member for Gorton said very clearly, there is a real and terrible risk that the Khmer Rouge could return to power. Those with expert, first-hand knowledge of Cambodia have warned of that for well over a year. For some reason that I do not understand, from the very start the Government and the Foreign Office have been unwilling to respond. There is some weird, deeply misguided, chess game of politics going on.

In that excellent book on Cambodia, "Punishing the Poor" by Eva Myslievisc, there is a startling quote from a member of the British embassy:

"Let's be realistic, it's only 6 million people."

That attitude is quite unacceptable to the people of this country. However, it seems to be the attitude that the Government are taking.

I agree with the right hon. Member for Gorton that we cannot really understand the present situation without looking back to the Khmer Rouge's tyranny between 1976 and 1980. However, we must consider that. As we remember the fallen of two world wars, we must also accept that the Khmer Rouge were far more brutal and murderous than Hitler. We must consider the terror and damage in the killing fields among a population not much bigger than that of Greater London. One million people

were executed or were killed in other ways. There were 450 doctors in 1975, but only 45 remained in 1979. Schools, hospitals and the legal system were abolished. There was an extraordinary, savage madness. The idea that that should be allowed to return is appalling.

Presumably Conservative Members will support the Government if there is a Division. However, they must recall that the Khmer Rouge regime was brought to an end only through Vietnamese intervention. That is a fact. No hon. Member could put his hand on his heart and say that the Vietnamese were wrong to intervene and topple such a regime. In a rather extraordinary passage towards the end of his speech, the Minister said that somehow or other the Vietnamese had a heavy responsibility for Cambodia. For God's sake—they stopped the regime. That is the crucial point.

Mr. Mullin: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia took place the very week that Tanzania invaded Uganda, with western support, to put an end to the Idi Amin regime? Quite different things were said about that.

Sir Russell Johnston: I had forgotten that, but the hon. Gentleman's point is fair and apposite.

We must surely accept that ousting Pol Pot was justified. What possible justification is there for the continuing isolation of what is the de facto Government of Cambodia in Phnom Penh? Despite the long passage in the Minister's speech about that, in any other country we would by now have accepted reality and sent ambassadors. In response to questions, we would have said that of course that does not mean that we approve of the regime, but it is in control and that has always been our policy. I have heard that policy reiterated many times when hon. Members have asked for ambassadors to be withdrawn because they did not like a regime. The answer is always that the regime is in control and the Government do not express a view for or against it.

The only reason for non-recognition was the continuing presence of Vietnamese troops. The argument was that the regime was not the de facto Government because the Vietnamese were in control. That argument has disappeared: the rug has been pulled out from under it. The Government must change their position. It is extraordinary that on Wednesday we shall be prepared to continue to support the United Nations recommendation of that gentleman from the Khmer Rouge.

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): The hon. Gentleman is suggesting that on Wednesday we shall debate the recognition of the representative of democratic Kampuchea. That is not on the agenda for Wednesday. There is a substantive resolution on what attitude or action the United Nations should take.

Sir Russell Johnston: On Wednesday the Government will have the right to object to the credentials of the Khmer Rouge representative, and that can change their position. They can do that if they have the political will to do so. That point was also made by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton and it is crucial if the House is to influence what the Government do at the United Nations.

The recent so-called Paris peace conference did not succeed because the West made the profound error of pushing to have the Khmer Rouge accepted as part of an interim Government. That is unacceptable to the remainder of Cambodians. I do not understand the Government's position and all the stuff about moderate Khmer Rouge participation. Who are the moderates and where are they? It is incredible nonsense and should be recognised as such. Lord Brabazon of Tara said that he did not know the names. The Minister and the Foreign Office have had time to produce the names of all those moderates.

Mrs. Mahon: Will the hon. Gentleman give way on this point about the moderate——

Sir Russell Johnston: I will give way in a moment, if the hon. Lady will calm herself.

Mrs. Mahon: It is an emotive issue.

Sir Russell Johnston: I will give way in a moment. I was about to finish my sentence.

If the Minister knows any moderate Khmer Rouge, hon. Members would be interested to hear of them. I certainly do not know any and those who work for Oxfam and other agencies in Cambodia do not know any, either.

Mrs. Mahon: I did not realise that I was being excitable. I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way. About 10 days ago, I wrote to the Prime Minister asking who were the reasonable members of the Khmer Rouge. I have had a holding letter but no reply to date.

Sir Russell Johnston: Perhaps the Minister for Overseas Development will comment on that.

To put it bluntly, the Paris conference failed because of the West's insistence of Khmer Rouge participation. I respect the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. He is a fair-minded and reasonable man. If the Government are serious about this matter, the best way forward is to establish links with the existing Phnom Penh Government and support a negotiated peace settlement based on free elections in which the Khmer Rouge play no part—no part whatever. The Khmer Rouge are not interested in free elections or fairness. Such an outcome could—I do not say will—lead to a more pluralist and neutral Cambodia. If the Government continue with their present policy, they may one day need to explain why the Khmer Rouge have again taken power by force.

5.14 pm

Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South): I lived in Cambodia for two years, so I speak against the Khmer Rouge with as much feeling as any other hon. Member. I view with as much horror as any other hon. Member the possibility of the Khmer Rouge's return to greater influence. I speak also with a greater feel for the country and certainly a greater knowledge of its history than some hon. Members have.

During the speech of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) I questioned how much of the recent history of Cambodia he was familiar with. I regret that, once again, the right hon. Gentleman's paranoia about the United States seemed to dominate his speech. Conservative Members are familiar with Labour Members' paranoia about the United States. It often causes them to make foreign policy misjudgments. It was interesting that the right hon. Gentleman did not mention a group of countries that have had a much greater influence on the formation of this country's policy. I refer to ASEAN, the Association of South-East Asian Nations,

[Sir Peter Blaker]

our European allies, our NATO allies and many other countries at the United Nations which agree with us. There are 74 United Nations countries, in addition to ourselves, sponsoring the resolution to be debated on Wednesday.

The right hon. Gentleman did not mention ASEAN at all. If an Opposition spokesman makes a major speech on this subject and does not mention ASEAN, he obviously does not know what he is talking about. That is patently obvious to anybody who knows the history of Cambodia or south-east Asia over the past 10 years. That is a fundamental condemnation of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. The thought crossed my mind that the right hon. Gentleman might regard this issue simply as a convenient bandwagon on which to jump.

The right hon. Gentleman suggested that we should recognise Hun Sen. He overlooked the fact that we do not now recognise any Governments. By implication the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston), too, suggested that we should recognise the Hun Sen Government. He said that if such a situation had existed for 10 years in any other country we would have recognised the Government in control. I do not believe that we would have recognised a Government who had been put into power by force or by war and had never been exposed to a free election. That is not our tradition.

My hon. Friend the Minister reminded us that the Conservative Government withdrew recognition from the Khmer Rouge in the days when we did recognise Governments or withdrew recognition from Governments, a practice which, as he explained, was changed in 1980.

The previous Labour Government declared that the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia was unjustified. Border incidents provoked by the Khmer Rouge have been mentioned. No doubt they occurred, but they did not justify the Vietnamese action. I agree with what the Labour Government said at the time. It certainly did not justify an occupation which lasted 11 years, without an opportunity for the Cambodian people to express their wishes.

Sir Russell Johnston: I cannot speak for the right hon. Gentleman, but when he referred to "border incidents" and to "troubles", I remind him that we are talking about 20,000 people dead.

Sir Peter Blaker: I do not know whether there were 20,000 dead, but the Pol Pot regime certainly caused trouble on the border. What I have just said—perhaps the hon. Gentleman should listen—is that not only did the Vietnamese occupy the whole of Cambodia in an all-out war which was launched on, as I recall it, Christmas day 1978, but they stayed for 11 years. If it was a punitive expedition and if there was no intention of establishing a Vietnamese influence, having established their point by punishing the Pol Pot regime, why did not the Vietnamese give the people of Cambodia an opportunity to show how they wished to be governed?

Mr. Heffer: I draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to an article by the former Prime Minister, the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), who stated:

"Any visitor to that country would tell you that whatever the natural dislike of the Cambodian people for their aggressive neighbours, the vast majority is far more horrified by the prospect of a return to power of the Khmer Rouge."

Does that mean nothing to the right hon. Gentleman?

Sir Peter Blaker *rose*——

Mr. Heffer: Before the right hon. Gentleman resumes his speech, I must point out that the Labour Government were wrong in what they said about the Vietnamese. Does what has happened, with the stopping of more than 2 million people—because 2 million people were killed—mean nothing at all to the right hon. Gentleman?

Sir Peter Blaker: I can only assume that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) was not listening to the early part of my speech, because I started by saying that I feel the same abhorrence for what has happened as any hon. Member. For heaven's sake, I lived in Cambodia for two years—which I do not think that any other hon. Member has done—so I know about the Cambodian people and how agreeable they naturally are. I lived in that country with great pleasure for two years. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to intervene, he should first take care to have listened to the earlier part of the speech in which he wishes to intervene.

I suspect that one reason why the Opposition have chosen this debate is that we have recently seen on television another example of what I describe as "Pilgerisation"—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] Well, I know something of the facts of Cambodia——

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): So does he.

Sir Peter Blaker: I know Cambodia from further back—for a longer period—than Mr. Pilger. To Pilgerise is to distort the real picture by a mixture of 50 per cent. fact, 25 per cent. omission of facts, and 25 per cent. innuendo. If anybody really believes that the true and dispassionate picture of Cambodia is that presented by Mr. Pilger's programmes, that person is sadly misled.

Mr. Heffer: Did Heath Pilgerise as well?

Sir Peter Blaker: Before coming to what I believe should be done, I want to put three points right. First—I do not believe that this has been mentioned so far—Vietnam is the hereditary enemy of Cambodia. Their relationship is as acrimonious historically as the relationship between any two countries of which one cares to think. The two countries are racially and culturally different. They are also different in religion and language. They have almost nothing in common. Their relationship is as acrimonious as that between India and Pakistan; Iran and Iraq; the Hutu and the Tuts; Wanda and Burundi; the Islamic people of Sudan and the Christian people of Sudan; the Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. Although that is the sort of relationship about which we are talking, no one has mentioned that yet. That is the context in which one has to put the 11 years of Vietnamese occupation. It is not occupation by a friendly neighbour, it is occupation by the ancestral enemy.

Mr. Lester: While accepting that that is the historical position, may I ask my right hon. Friend to accept that for the people of Cambodia their relationship with Vietnam is considerably better than their relationship with the Pol Pot regime?

Sir Peter Blaker: There seems to be some impression that I am defending the Pol Pot regime—

Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. George Galloway (Glasgow, Hillhead): The hon. Gentleman should read his speech in *Hansard* in the morning.

Sir Peter Blaker: I am assuming that hon. Members are intent not simply on scoring points, but on understanding the position. I accept that after Christmas day 1978, when Vietnam invaded and destroyed the Pol Pot regime, the position for most—nearly all—Cambodians was better than under the Pol Pot regime. I entirely support that proposition. I have never denied it. I am saying, first, that the Vietnamese invasion was condemned at the time by the Labour Government——

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): We were wrong.

Sir Peter Blaker: I accept that many Opposition Members think that what the Labour Government did was wrong. They think that lots of things that the Labour Government did in office were wrong. It is an entertaining experience to watch them——

Mr. Heffer: Has the Prime Minister never made any mistakes?

Sir Peter Blaker: It was not necessary for Vietnam to remain in occupation of Cambodia for 11 years with large forces and, knowing the relationship between the two countries, to give the people of Cambodia——

Mr. Heffer *rose*——

Sir Peter Blaker: No, I shall not give way at the moment.

Knowing the ancestral ambitions of Vietnam, which, during the entire 19th century, was gradually nibbling away at Cambodian territory—as Thailand was from the other side—it should have been Vietnamese policy, if Vietnam was genuinely peace-loving and had the interests of the Cambodian people at heart, to give them the opportunity of freely deciding by what Government they should be ruled.

Mr. Wareing: Surely the events of the past few weeks justify the period of that occupation by the Vietnamese, because, when the Vietnamese withdrew, the Khmer Rouge invaded. Indeed, they have already occupied the town of Pailin—there are reports of 17,000 people killed in that part of the world—and are now approaching Battambang, which is the second largest town in Cambodia. Unless there is some international action, there will be a return of Pol Pot, which the right hon. Gentleman seems to be justifying.

Sir Peter Blaker: I can only assume that the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) is not listening to my speech either. I wish that Opposition Members would listen to what I am actually saying as opposed to what they think I am saying or what they would like me to be saying. That is not what I was saying.

Mr. Wareing: I have been there.

Sir Peter Blaker: I will come—if I am allowed to—to some proposals about what should be done. Meanwhile, I repeat that Britain has not been alone in the policy that it has followed during the past 11 years.

My second point is that, after the Vietnamese invasion we were urged, as were our friends and allies in Europe and the United States, by the countries of ASEAN, next door to Vietnam and Cambodia, to adopt the policy to which we eventually agreed—that is, to reject the credentials of the Vietnamese-installed regime at the United Nations and to insist that Vietnam should withdraw from Cambodia. That urging was not from the United States, it was from the people of ASEAN: the south-east Asian nations, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and subsequently Brunei. They were extremely nervous about Vietnam which, after all, only a few years earlier had won the Vietnam war in which North Vietnam was the aggressor. The Vietnamese had by far the largest army in that part of the world—an extremely powerful army. There would have been great alarm in ASEAN if we had adopted any other course. Indeed, that course was adopted by most of the free world.

To assume that the United States policy is one of revenge against Vietnam and to assume that, along with the other 74 countries at the United Nations which share our view, we have tamely followed the wishes of the United States, is wholly to mislead oneself. The policy was motivated by a refusal to recognise aggression, and it was urged on us and other like-minded countries especially by the friendly countries of south-east Asia. Our action had the successful effect of stabilising south-east Asia during a dangerous time.

My third point relates to Prince Sihanouk. When I was in Cambodia in the 1950s, Prince Sihanouk, who had been king, but abdicated because he wanted to become Prime Minister, ran for election. I observed the election of 1955 on behalf of the British Government and it was the first election to be conducted after independence was declared in 1954. In the judgment of all the observers, including not only our embassy of which I was a member, but the international control commission, consisting of Poland, Canada, and India, that election was fair. Sihanouk emerged as the victor with an enormous margin. It is no exaggeration to say that the people of Cambodia regarded him as something close to God.

Since the 1955 election, things have changed. Sihanouk has frequently made statements that have been regarded, understandably, as eccentric. It is my guess, however, that if a free election were conducted again, any party led by Sihanouk would win with a substantial majority. The way to find out would be to arrange for a properly conducted, internationally supervised, free election. The speech of the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton was extremely thin regarding his own proposals.

Sihanouk is no friend of the Khmer Rouge. I believe that five of his children and many of his grandchildren were killed by the Khmer Rouge, and he was imprisoned by it. He has no reason to love the Khmer Rouge. Sihanouk's forces, which, unfortunately, are less numerous than the forces of the Khmer Rouge, are separate from them. The so-called coalition between the Khmer Rouge, Sihanouk and Son San does not represent one army controlled by the Khmer Rouge—there are three armies fighting in three locations. If Sihanouk and Son San believe that it would be right to have an interim

[Sir Peter Blaker]

Government to prepare for elections, in which part of the Khmer Rouge would be included, Opposition Members should attach importance to that view.

I also believe that it would be legitimate for the British Government, and for other Governments who want Cambodia restored to freedom, to support Sihanouk. Among other things, that support would strengthen him against the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Does not the right hon. Gentleman accept that the coalition is dominated diplomatically, politically, militarily, and legally by the Khmer Rouge? That is the problem with recognising that coalition—the dominant partner is the Khmer Rouge.

Sir Peter Blaker: Certainly the forces of the Khmer Rouge represent the largest power militarily, but I do not accept that it dominates the coalition.

One of the problems is China. The Chinese Government have been the principal supporter of the Khmer Rouge. A few months ago there were signs that China was prepared to change that policy. Chinese spokesmen have told me that the Khmer Rouge have made blunders—a strong statement coming from the Chinese. I do not know the present Chinese posture nor whether it has changed since the events of 4 June. When my right hon. Friend replies to this debate, I would be interested to know whether there is any information about the current Chinese attitude. One of the keys to resolving this extremely difficult problem would be for China to stop helping the Khmer Rouge.

What should be our course of action? We are right to aim for a comprehensive settlement, and that was something that the recent Paris conference hoped to achieve. That settlement should involve United Nations verification that the Vietnamese forces have withdrawn. An interim Government should be established to prepare for the elections. It is not satisfactory for the Hun Sen Government alone to prepare those elections as I do not believe that the rest of the world would have confidence in their freedom. The elections should be supervised by the United Nations. When the comprehensive settlement has been achieved, the incoming Government should receive large-scale economic assistance from all aid donors.

We cannot tell who would win such an election as the situation has changed enormously in the past 15 years. Perhaps the scepticism displayed by Opposition Members towards Sihanouk is justified—I do not know. The only way to find out is to hold such an election. I doubt very much, however, that the victor would be Hun Sen.

Unlike the right hon. Member for Gorton and the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) I do not believe that it is sufficiently established that Hun Sen is the acceptable Head of Government for the Cambodian people. There are strong suggestions that all the Vietnamese forces have left, but we cannot assume that that is correct. That withdrawal requires verification, especially as the Chinese have said that they will withdraw support from the Khmer Rouge once they are satisfied that the Vietnamese forces have left.

The Labour party has initiated this debate with inadequate understanding of the history of Cambodia or of the factors that influenced our Government, in common with 74 other Governments, to adopt their present policy. That policy is right, but I also believe that the Government have been right recently to shift it in a more positive direction. No doubt we shall continue to assess what the next step should be. We should work as hard as we can for the resumption of a comprehensive conference leading towards a comprehensive settlement.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. This is a brief debate and obviously a number of hon. Members want to take part. I appeal for speeches shorter than those we have had so far.

5.37 pm

Mr. Ernie Ross (Dundee, West): I assure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I shall be brief, as I know that a number of my hon. Friends want to participate. I believe that my hon. Friends' contributions will represent a much more accurate reflection of the situation in south-east Asia than that presented by the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker). It is relevant that the only date he could mention when he had been in the area was in the mid-1950s. His speech reminded me of someone harking back to those old colonial days of the 1950s. I hope that some of my hon. Friends, who have had much more up-to-date experience than the right hon. Gentleman, can contribute to the debate.

The right hon. Member for Blackpool, South attacked the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). The right hon. Gentleman suggested that my right hon. Friend had omitted to mention a number of things. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) will rectify that when she replies.

What my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton was trying to make clear, not only on behalf of the Labour Party, but on behalf of the other opposition parties, and even some Conservative Members, was the absolute abhorrence among our people of the way in which the British Government are deliberately distorting our position in the United Nations and other world bodies as it relates to Cambodia. I am sure that, when we read the speeches in *Hansard*, even the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South will have cause to regret some of the things he said, especially when he reads the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton.

Some of the right hon. Gentleman's comments were incredible. He said that, when the Vietnamese forces invaded Kampuchea, as it was then known, they destroyed Pol Pot. That is nonsense, and I hope that it is the last piece of nonsense we hear in the debate. They managed to drag Pol Pot from Kampuchea across the border into Thailand, where the regime was sustained by the same forces who are trying to justify that sustenance today in the Chamber. From the camps, the Pol Pot regime continued a policy of genocide against the Cambodians, both in the camps and in Cambodia by incursions across the Thai border.

We should remind ourselves that it was the deliberate intention of the Pol Pot regime to remove the intellectuals from the infrastructure of Kampuchea. That caused the problems, which meant that the Vietnamese had to stay in that country until the Cambodians thought it was important for them to withdraw. By the policy of genocide, the regime removed a whole stratum of doctors, academics and other educated and intelligent professionals who would have been required to rebuild Cambodia. The

removal of that stratum resulted in the problems with which Cambodia is still struggling. The Government have neither given nor offered aid to Cambodia that would make up for the removal of that stratum, and it is not as if we do not have the facilities or the people power to have given that type of support.

It is important that we remind ourselves of the comments made by the aid organisations in Cambodia. Frank Judd, the director of Oxfam, described the British Government's policy as "naive". At the end of the debate, the House will share that view. It is naive for the British Government to suppose that military training and aid given to the camps will not help the Khmer Rouge. He compares the British Government's policy of not giving aid inside Cambodia to that of the British people who are donating generously and willingly to the aid organisations working in that country.

On Friday, Mr. Derek Lietch, a constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion), stood in Dundee high street and within two hours had gathered 150 signatures on a petition which simply said that there should be an end to British Government support for the Khmer forces in Cambodia. If people were to go on to the streets outside the House or in any constituency, they would have no difficulty in achieving more than 150 signatures opposing the British Government's present proposals for Cambodia.

If the Minister has a chance to talk to her right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary before she replies to the debate, she might be able to tell me what response he intends to send to the philosophy department at Dundee university. On 7 November, a letter signed by the entire department was sent to the right hon. Gentleman making clear its concern for the plight of the civilian population in Cambodia and its horror and incredulity that we should co-sponsor a resolution in the United Nations that would ultimately leave the Khmer Rouge with some form of control in Cambodia.

During this short debate, it would be wrong not to speak of some of the other problems that need to be dealt with if there is to be a realistic end to the problems faced by the Cambodian people and the whole of the south-east peninsula. We should address ourselves not only to Cambodia but to Vietnam.

There has been reference to the Paris peace conferences. The Paris peace conference that failed in August this year was important for the forces in Cambodia. In the peace talks of 1973, the United States Government agreed to pay $3·2 billion to the Vietnamese people for the war of attrition that was launched against them. Not one cent of that money has been paid to a country that suffered considerable war damage and experienced the first large-scale use of herbicidal warfare. Over 41 million lb of agent orange were dropped on the Vietnamese people between 1961 and 1971. The damage can still be seen among the Vietnamese people and in the defoliation.

The United States and British Governments have made no effort to help the Vietnamese people, despite the fact that the Vietnamese have said that they are prepared to discuss—particularly with the United States Government—ways in which they could be involved in the rebuilding of Vietnam. Only with the economic aid that is dearly required for Vietnam and Cambodia will there be an end to the problems in that area.

Many Opposition Members wish to contribute to the debate, and I am sure that, if they catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we shall hear their experiences of visits to Cambodia and Vietnam. They will be able to tell the House about the determination of the Cambodian and Vietnamese people to live peacefully with their neighbours, if they are allowed. They will not be able to live in peace if we are party to Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge being allowed back into Cambodia.

5.47 pm

Mr. Jim Lester (Broxtowe): I disagree profoundly with my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), who said that this is not a matter of grave urgency. It is a matter of international concern and of profound public concern in this and other countries. As the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) said, I initiated an Adjournment debate on 1 November. In that debate I pressed for a major debate on this part of the world and I welcome the fact that the Opposition have provided that opportunity.

It is now time for statesmanship of high order. The House should pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), who has had a profound interest in the subject for many years. Those of us who have followed the matter realise that the position is changing fast. I welcomed my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's reply to me in his statement. However, we need to consider the matter in reverse order to the way that he put it. The first and most critical matter is the United Nations debate on the resolution. Within its five pages, the changes are minimal and insufficient to fulfil the statement to me that it would reflect the changing position.

I remain concerned that our attitude is one of high risk: our ambivalence over our support for Prince Sihanouk and the Cambodian people leaves open the risk that the Khmer Rouge military could return as a result of the civil war. I suspect that, within the American Administration, and—as my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South said—the Association of the South-East Asian Nations, there are many different views. One has only to witness what the Thai Prime Minister is trying to do to recognise that. I suspect that the same applies to our European partners. We should look carefully at our policies and statements at all times.

I shall ask a straightforward question about this resolution of my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench: what would our policy be if Prince Sihanouk resigned tomorrow? He has resigned more than once from different posts. What would our policy be if we built it entirely on Prince Sihanouk? I recognise the worries and tribulations which he has suffered. I have read his book, and it would be a good thing if others read it. His book was written in French and has not been translated into English. I understand the man, what he feels about the Khmer Rouge and the interim period in which he was, and I believe remains, a puppet.

Prince Sihanouk is not the vehicle for a settlement in Kampuchea. He is a creature of China and less independent than Hun Sen, who has often been accused of being a creature of the Vietnamese. However, I know, because I have discussed with Hun Sen, the 100 hours of negotiation which he had with Prince Sihanouk in an effort to bring him back into the Government and reconcile him with the Kampuchean people.

Prince Sihanouk demanded various things, such as a new flag, a return to calling the nation Cambodia instead

[Mr. Jim Lester]

of Kampuchea, and a new national anthem. Hun Sen returned to his assembly and, however much it is criticised, he has obtained a new flag which is more attractive than the old one, and the country is now being called Cambodia. The only thing with which he had trouble was the national anthem, because the national assembly in Phnom Penh did not like its slowness and wanted something brighter. That is an example of how things have been done to assist reconciliation, yet each time Prince Sihanouk goes back to Peking, he returns to his original formula involving the Khmer Rouge.

Much of the propaganda, which is still about and which poisoned the Paris conference, is reflected in a letter which Prince Sihanouk wrote to *The New York Times* on 13 March, following an article by Elizabeth Becker:

"It is most regrettable that Ms. Becker confuses the traitor regime of Cambodia that serves only the interests of the Vietnamese Communist colonialists with that of the real Cambodia. The People's Republic of Kampuchea of Hun Sen is not Cambodia; it is merely a creation, and a creature of the expansionist and colonialist Vietnam Communist regime."

Are those the words of settlement? I think not.

Those of us who have had the good fortune to travel to Cambodia twice relatively recently—in 1987 and only a few weeks ago—know that this is not an accurate picture of Hun Sen, Vietnam or the scene within Cambodia. I suspect that the United Kingdom Government and others have a lack of balance in this matter, because they have no appreciation of the reality of what is happening within Cambodia.

Earlier this year, *The Bangkok Post* of Wednesday 17 May said:

"Khmer resistance leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk has said Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping strongly warned him against breaking his alliance with the Khmer Rouge . . . The Bangkok-based diplomats told AFP Prince Sihanouk had told them Deng had threatened to 'fight' him if he 'expelled the Khmer Rouge'."

Bearing in mind the fact that we have a civil war and a coalition of convenience, my horror is that there will be not just three armies against Hun Sen, but armies against one another: the Khmer Rouge against the Sihanoukists—with whom they have been in conflict in the past. Therefore, it is essential that we have a far better understanding of the problem.

I understand the argument of Prince Sihanouk and the coalition, that, as we have this army, the only way to deal with it is to involve it in the coalition or the interim Government, which is what we are really talking about. I fear that philosophy, because it supports Mao's theory that power grows from the barrel of a gun. That is a dangerous argument to accept.

The only reason why the Khmer Rouge army has not been defeated is because it has had refuge in Thailand. If the Vietnamese had gone after it in Thailand, all hell would have been let loose. It has been sustained, in secret, in China and in Thailand. The only way in which genuinely to judge its military effectiveness would be if the Thais were allowed to pursue the policy which they now seek.

I do not know whether there is any truth in the notion of Sihanoukists being trained. In his policy to the American Administration, Steve Solarz suggested that Prince Sihanouk and his forces should be supplied with lethal aid to give them greater bargaining power in Paris. As I understand it, Steve Solarz changed his mind following the events at Paris, and that aid was not provided. I suspect that, if we had done any training with Sihanouk forces, it would be more designed to deal with the question posed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) and to suggest that there was a more equal force between the Khmer Rouge and the Sihanoukists, rather than to train the Sihanoukists to fight the Vietnamese. That is why I constantly refer to the coalition as one of convenience.

We cannot impose, as we tried in Paris, perhaps through diplomatic skills, a quadripartite interim Government. There are three options which we should pursue more deliberately. The first is the Jakarta formula which was negotiated between Hun Sen and Prince Sihanouk. That required that there should be external Khmers, represented by Prince Sihanouk and his coalition Government—within which there could be members of the Khmer Rouge, although members could not stand in their own right. The most politically unacceptable factor in Cambodia, and the one which, Hun Sen says, would stop him delivering an interim Government, would be if that Government included the Khmer Rouge with its armies intact.

We could pursue this Jakarta formula, which was negotiated and then reneged upon, with the external and internal Khmers in an interim Government for a short period to organise the elections which we all seek. We all—including the internal Government—want to find the quickest way to organise elections which are eligible, free and fair, to enable the Cambodian people to choose their own future Government.

The second option is to back the Prime Minister Chatichai of Thailand in his small steps policy, which is well documented in *The Washington Post* of 11 November, in which the Thais urge a shift in United States policy and the Prime Minister wants President Bush to be more conciliatory to Hanoi. The Prime Minister says that we should abandon the elusive goal of the power-sharing formula and recognise much more the Vietnamese position. We should get the three or four competing factions in an informal manner to proceed towards the goal of a United Nations team visiting the country to reassure everyone of two facts: first, that the Vietnamese have withdrawn, and secondly that—this is one reason why the Paris talks failed—the settlers are no longer there.

The third option is the Namibia solution, which we all hope and pray has been successful, even as the votes are being counted. In Namibia, the United Nations was able to organise free and fair elections with what was seen to be an illegal regime—the South African regime. The conditions were that the South African military were withdrawn into their barracks and the external military were not allowed to return with guns, although they could return without them. An election was organised, of which we shall all, hopefully, see the results soon.

Mr. Dalyell: On the question of external military, what is the hon. Gentleman's view of alleged British military training of forces in Cambodia? Does he accept that, when Ministers say that they never discuss these matters, that is belied by the fact that press statements were issued in relation to the SAS training for the South Korea olympics, and in relation to Mazambique, Spain and a Foreign Office statement on the work which the British military are rightly carrying out in Colombia. Therefore, there is no precedent for not making statements to the Commons about the military problems.

Mr. Lester: I have read the *Jane's Defence Weekly* articles, which may or may not be true. I do not want to be sidetracked by this issue, but as I read it, the document revealed basic military training to forces under the control of Prince Sihanouk in Thailand, not Cambodia. Whether that happened, I do not know. However, if it did, I suspect that it was more because Prince Sihanouk, in all his representations to western leaders, has constantly complained about the weakness of his military position in relation to Khmer Rouge. I suspect that if that happened, it was more to give him increased political and military power as against the Khmer Rouge within the coalition than to enable him to be successful in any civil war. In any case, I strongly press all sides to end the civil war—that is paramount.

The resolution to be debated next Wednesday should include a new form of words that would enable the Secretary-General to continue his policy which started in Paris and to initiate a mission to Phnom Penh and Cambodia. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South suggested, that mission should verify the Vietnamese withdrawal and all that should flow from that. It is wrong to move the goalposts as events unfold.

When the Foreign Affairs Select Committee went to Vietnam way back in 1986, we recommended that our policy should be to encourage the normalisation of relationships with America and with other ASEAN countries as soon as possible after the Vietnamese had left Cambodia. We do not need to verify that they have left, but many Governments will not formally recognise that until it has the UN seal of approval. That should be given quickly, so that normalisation can follow and we can end the embargo on Vietnam, which should be rehabilitated within ASEAN, as it has applied to join. The ASEAN nations must put their thinking caps on and make a proper response to that application.

The mission should also verify that there are not 1 million Vietnamese settlers. If one studies carefully what happened in Paris and in the ad hoc committee, one discovers that it all fell apart because of the prejudices of the factions.

The arguments revolved around "genocide" not being allowed to be included in the resolution, and the Vietnamese settlers.

As I have said before, we all know that genocide took place. Those of us who have been to Cambodia have tried hard to discover the 1 million Vietnamese settlers who are paraded by the Chinese and Sihanouk. The commission could verify that; the commission offered by Hun Sen would include Khmer-speaking external Khmers who can tell the difference between Vietnamese and Khmers, and who speak the language.

The resolution should also underline the need for the immediate suspension of hostilities and of arms supplies from all sources—whether from China, Russia or America. I hope that the Americans are not sending the lethal aid that they talked about. It is not good for the British Government to continue to be seen to be siding with the coalition to the exclusion of the internal Government. Such a lack of balance cannot lead to the solution that we all seek.

Many of us have been to the camps on the Thai border. The resolution mentions people being allowed to return freely and safely to their homeland. Most of us who have been to the camps recognise that the people cannot even return freely to the villages around them and certainly not those between the camps. The condition in the camps has been well documented—we have had to send a special police force to uphold a form of justice there, to replace the barbarism that prevailed before.

To suggest that these camps are good advertisements for the coalition Government and for the way in which they treat people is untrue. We do not know much about the camps under Khmer Rouge control, because until recently no one was allowed into them. Although one receives a tremendous welcome when entering the other two camps, one can detect that they are camps for the rest and rehabilitation of the military forces who have been fighting in Cambodia.

The internal Government's signature on a document allowing these people to return to Cambodia was given to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees long ago, but I suspect that they could not cross the threshold of the country even if they wanted to. In Phnom Penh, we looked carefully at the conditions for the return of the external Khmers and at the work done by the Red Cross with the UNHCR in the form of plans to facilitate the end of the misery of the people in these camps.

I welcome my right hon. Friend's efforts to give increased aid to Cambodia. I know that she had a great deal to do with that and with the much more forthcoming attitude of her predecessor—who began pound-for-pound aid to the non-governmental organisations—and that she is using the heads of NGOs to talk about what can be done on a greater scale. I refer, for instance, to the £250,000 which has been promised to UNICEF and which I hope will go to the hospital that we saw on the Pilger film. The hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) and I have been there and can vouch for its needs.

The United Nations Development Programme report which I mentioned in my Adjournment debate is available; it analyses constructively the desperate needs of Cambodia, despite the fact that the UNDP could not go to Phnom Penh. The report draws a conclusion similar to that to which we came when we visited the country: an aid programme on a sufficient scale cannot be started until there is peace, and until there is confidence among those who have to administer it. A return of the people who are capable of interfacing with those who want to give the aid must come first.

Part of the problem is that the aid programmes, even those from the Soviet Union, have great difficulty finding the necessary intermediaries to transfer the knowledge and aid, thanks to the ravages of Pol Pot and the lack of confidence among many of the people serving in the Administration. It is not enough merely to increase the aid programme—the waterworks are a good example of that. Oxfam has done marvellous work getting the waterworks up to World Health Organisation standards—when the water leaves the waterworks. It then goes into a piping system which is completely destroyed and broken into at every level by people using it instead of wells. Replacing the water system in a city like Phnom Penh is not work for an NGO; it is a matter for a massive infrastructure aid programme.

The Government have recognised that it is important that someone from Bangkok should visit Phnom Penh to see for himself what the hon. Member for Cynon Valley and I have been trying to say since 1987. We are not spokesmen for the Hun Sen Government; I have been around the world enough to be reasonably fair, but I know that the picture in Phnom Penh does not bear out the

[Mr. Lester]

propaganda that we hear from Bangkok. The Government in Phnom Penh have struggled against impossible odds to bring about some rehabilitation. A fundamental change has been wrought between 1987 and a few weeks ago. There is a thriving market economy, in which gold and motor cars can be bought; there are new hotels, but there is still a desperate need for infrastructure.

Pagodas are being rebuilt and pagoda education is beginning again—hardly the action of a Stalinist-Communist Government. The rehabilitation process is borne out by the UNDP report.

Hun Sen has been attacked in an underhand way as having been a former member of the Khmer Rouge, but that must be put in context. As he said in his press conference in Phnom Penh, he joined the Khmer nationalist movement with Prince Sihanouk at a time when the Americans backed Lol Non's attempt to take over. Hun Sen sees himself—in this he is supported by the Prime Minister of Thailand—as a nationalist, and that is what he is. Prince Sihanouk was the big fish in that struggle, and Hun Sen was a very small fish, so it is not good enough to cast doubts on his sincerity and on what he has tried to do by linking him with the Khmer Rouge and its terrible activities.

As we have continually said, Britain can play a role if it sets out to do so. We are the only member of the Security Council which has not been directly involved in the conflict and we chaired the committee which finally settled the Vietnam war. I beg my right hon. Friend the Minister to go to the Foreign Secretary and to all members of her team and press them to pay much more lively attention to what has been said in the House. They should bring about a dramatic change of policy and should do a great deal more to achieve the result that we all seek.

6.10 pm

Mr. Robert N. Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby): When I saw the answer that the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) was given by the Foreign Secretary last week, I thought that it signified some change of mood by the Government, in that they were willing to give some aid to Cambodia. However, when I heard the Chamberlainesque speech by the Minister, my doubts about Government policy returned very rapidly.

At least the Vietnamese have left Cambodia. In his answer to the hon. Member for Broxtowe, the Foreign Secretary said as much—that the Government accepted that the Vietnamese had left. However, we have heard speeches from the Minister and from the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) the main tenor of which was how nasty the Vietnamese were to invade Cambodia and get rid of the murderous Pol Pot. When I hear such speeches, I wonder where we are going.

The right hon. Member for Blackpool, South talked about free elections. How can there be free elections in the middle of a civil war? The danger that many people thought would arise if the Vietnamese withdrew from Cambodia is unfolding before our eyes. There are reports of 17,000 people already killed and of the town of Pailin already occupied by the murderous legions of Pol Pot.

Sir Peter Blaker: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wareing: I shall not give way. Other hon. Members wish to take part in the debate.

The forces of Pol Pot are now marching on Battambang. It is a regional capital and the second largest city in Cambodia. Poor and desperate as it is, Cambodia depends greatly on its jute production and Battambang has Cambodia's only factory for making the sacks in which the jute is wrapped and sent to market. The factory is financed by Oxfam and there are British people in the town, Oxfam people working on an irrigation scheme. If that town falls, it is widely rumoured that the Khmer Rouge has said that it will go full belt for a military solution.

How can we talk about free elections and about the Vietnamese at a time when armies similar to those of Hitler in 1940 are sweeping across Cambodia? It can only be a matter of weeks before they reach Phnom Penh and once again impose the foul Pol Pot regime. The people held responsible for that will be those who take no action now and just laugh about the situation, the people who will go to the United Nations next Wednesday and refuse to take any action whatever.

In August I visited the camps at Khao-I-Dang and Rythisen on the border with Thailand. I pay tribute to the gallant British nurses who are working in the hospital there. They are from Bristol, Gloucester, Manchester and Stockport. Those young girls are doing a marvellous job in that hospital, as I know the hon. Member for Broxtowe and my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) have seen for themselves. A Finnish women surgeon working on her own is dealing with all the necessary amputations in an area ravaged by minefields, which from time to time suffers shellfire. A young Frenchman is training the Cambodians to make wheelchairs and artificial limbs from the very poor materials that they have.

Those people require assistance, and so far no practical assistance has been given by the British Government to Cambodians on either side of the border. However, the silence of the Minister confirms that aid is going to the Khmer Rouge by way of training its allies in weaponry. We know that is true because the Government remain silent about it and silence speaks volumes.

There are 140,000 refugees in the camps around the Thailand-Cambodia border. Of those refugees, no fewer than 59·35 per cent. are under the age of 24. That means that most of them remember very little about Cambodia. They were very young or not born at all when Pol Pot ravaged their homeland. The site 2 camp of Rythisen has the largest concentration of Cambodians outside Phnom Penh. They are living in a relatively urban community. There should be steady repatriation to Cambodia, because those people need to be trained as farmers, the only occupation that will be open to them. We need an economic development package, not a military training package, to train those young people. The fact that they are predominantly young people reflects what happened in the killing fields of Cambodia, when their elder brothers and older people were killed in the Hitlerite fashion that we know as the hallmark of Pol Pot.

The Khmer Rouge are undoubtedly being assisted by the Chinese and encouraged by the United States and Britain by the silence and their intervention in attempts to train people to carry weapons into Cambodia. China probably more than any other country was responsible for the collapse of the peace talks in Paris. The Chinese

Government were the perpetrators of the massacre in Tiananmen square and China's Foreign Minister is quoted in the *South China Morning Post* as having insisted that any change in Cambodia would mean the end of the existing Government in Phnom Penh and the installation of a coalition Government which must, as far as China is concerned, include the Khmer Rouge.

There seemed some sign in the Foreign Secretary's reply on Wednesday that the Government will look again at their policy. The right hon. Member for Blackpool, South talked about "Pilgerisation", but it is not just that, because on television we saw the actuality of conditions for the people in Cambodia, the life of the people in the camps. British people recognise the truth when they see it; that is why they will put increasing pressure on their Members of Parliament to make the Government change their mind.

The Government have a golden opportunity on Wednesday to raise the whole issue again in the United Nations General Assembly. I fear that, in a few weeks, we shall be talking about Phnom Penh as if it were Paris after 14 June 1940, when the Nazis occupied it. There is a serious war and a crisis in Cambodia and the legions of Pol Pot are not standing aside and saying, "Let us wait and see if we can have free elections." They are getting on with their murderous job of returning to power. Our Government have an opportunity to speak for what the British people want, which is justice for the people of Cambodia.

6.19 pm

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): I thought that the Minister's contribution was shameful. It seriously damaged his justified reputation as a decent human being. I appreciate that he did not write it, but he should have had the strength to refuse to read out what was clearly written by a civil servant. I trust that when my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman)—he is not here at the moment—takes office, there will be a shakeup of the south-east Asia department of the Foreign and Commonwealth office.

The low point of the Minister's speech was his attempt to provide a history of events in Kampuchea but to omit the fact that the Vietnamese invasion was in response to what the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker) called "an incident" on the border. This incident was an attempt by the Khmer Rouge to annexe the western provinces of Vietnam. I know some of the people who were living there at that time, and I know what they saw. This attempt resulted in the butchery of thousands of women and children and similar incidents took place on the border with Thailand.

Whoever wrote the Minister's speech knows that such events occurred. The Minister does not know that. As he cheerfully admitted in the Adjournment debate the other day, he knows not the slightest thing about this issue, as it is not within his remit. It is fundamental to the dishonesty that ran throughout his speech that he attempted to skip over the history of those events, and did not mention them. I invite the House to contemplate how Her Majesty's Government might respond if a foreign power attempted to annexe the southern counties of England, and in the process butchered thousands of our citizens. I wonder whether we would have described that as "an incident".

The second low point of the Minister's speech was his refusal to respond to the determined attempts by my right hon. Friend the Member for Gorton to get from him the facts about the presence of the SAS on the Thai-Cambodian border. We have been told that that is only a token gesture. *Jane's Defence Weekly* has said that there are only six or seven of them and that they are training people to put mines on roads and to blow up some of the bridges that Oxfam is helping the people to build. No doubt we have made that token gesture as a result of great pressure from the United States, just as, when the Vietnam war was at its height, we were under great pressure to send British service men there to make the war look respectable. I believe that we did and that the bodies of a number of SAS people are still to be found in the soil of Vietnam, but I shall pass over that.

Like other hon. Members, I have been to Cambodia. I went for the first time in August 1973 and my experience was a little different from that of the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South because I strayed off the cocktail party circuit. At the time, Phnom Penh was surrounded and American B52s were burning the country down village by village. I saw with my own eyes what they were doing. I woke up at night and the whole city was shaking because of the bombs, and the sky was lit up. They were bombing up to the suburbs. That bombing was controlled from the windowless bunker which passed for the American embassy.

The Americans were caught at it. I remember an American journalist, Sylvanna Foa, accidentally twiddling with the knobs of her portable radio and discovering that the instructions to the pilots of the B52s were coming directly from the American embassy, and could be heard on the radio frequency. That is possibly the only time that diplomats accredited to a country were attempting to burn it down.

I also vividly remember the American Government's principal problem in this case—their ignorance. The Americans must be mentioned frequently because we were only following on behind them in this as in many other cases. They were amazingly ignorant even then about the events in the country that they were burning down. I remember sitting in that windowless bunker in Phnom Penh in August 1973 and an American first secretary describing to me how the Khmer Rouge did not exist. He developed the theme at some length.

We have to pinch ourselves to remember that the official policy was that it was a Vietnamese invasion, although a handful of indigenous Khmer might be involved. He told me that Saloth Sar, which is Pol Pot's real name, Hou Youn, Hu Nim and Kieu Samphan, who were the original leaders of the Khmer Rouge, had been murdered by Sihanouk. However, there was a film of Sihanouk visiting what were described as the liberated zones. A film-maker himself, he had filmed himself embracing the three "ghosts" as they were known. That film would have been available, but when I put that to the first secretary, he said, "We think that one of them may be alive, but the other two were actors impersonating the leaders." That was the line 18 months before Phnom Penh fell. The Americans were still denying that the Khmer Rouge existed.

The irony is that now the people whom they were bombing—the Khmer Rouge—and the Sihanouk supporters are those whom the Americans are helping to get back to power. We have to pinch ourselves to remember —the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) referred to this—that Sihanouk was removed in a military coup run

[Mr. Chris Mullin]

by the Americans. The country was a wholly-owned subsidiary of the United States at that time. The Americans replaced him with the lunatic Marshal Lon Nol —a man who believed that the Communists were strapping rockets to rabbits and sending them into Government installations.

I remember all that because I was there and I remember going back in 1980 shortly after Pol Pot had left town, courtesy of the Vietnamese. By then, Cambodia was a wholly isolated country. The scenes that one saw have been recorded elsewhere, so I shall not repeat them, but I remember many things. I remember the day, in February 1980, when I flew out of Phnom Penh. I turned on the radio in Bangkok and heard a British Foreign Office Minister speaking at a conference in Geneva about Vietnamese atrocities in Cambodia. When I got back to London, I rang up the man and asked him for chapter and verse of evidence for that statement. He became extremely flustered and said that he had left his notes in Geneva. We can see that the knowledge among Foreign Office Ministers has not improved.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Mullin: I will not give way, if the hon. Gentleman will forgive me. Time is short and those on the Front Bench wish to speak. I have waited rather a long time to get this off my chest.

Mr. Arnold: And I am still waiting.

Mr. Mullin: I have travelled extensively in those regions and one of the questions that occurs to me is this. Where does the Foreign Office get its information? Does it come from the British embassy in Hanoi? I know many of the people there. They are decent, intelligent good people and I believe that they are reporting back accurately on what they see around them. The information driving the Government to this ludicrous policy is thus unlikely to come from that source. Does it come from the British embassy in Bangkok? The ambassador in Bangkok, Mr. Tonkin, was the former ambassador in Hanoi. I have not met him since he went to Bangkok, but he was a decent intelligent man then and I believe that he and his staff are reporting accurately. So the information does not come from Bangkok.

The answer is that the information comes on the telex from the United States. One day a telex from Washington will give Mr. Colvin and the other civil servants in the south-east Asia department—the architects of this policy —permission to change the line, and it will change. A Minister will come running down here and read another brief that he does not wholly understand. I am sad to say that we are a satellite state, and this is one of the most humiliating examples of our satellite status. We are the Bulgaria of western Europe, but at a time when glasnost is running through Bulgaria one would like to think that it might also extend to the western satellites of the United States.

I leave the House with one question. If, as Ministers repeatly assure us, Pol Pot is unpopular—everyone assures us that they have nothing to do with him—and nobody loves him and nobody has anything to do with him, how has he survived in exile over the past decade? Let no one say that it is all to do with the Chinese. China has no contiguous border with Cambodia. The weapons that come from China are transported in ships which come from the former American air base at Utapao. They are taken in Thai army trucks to the various Khmer Rouge camps along the Cambodian border. The Thai army, which is a partial subsidiary of the United States, pauses only to take its rake-off from the Chinese weapons.

Where does the food come from? It comes from the United Nations border relief operation. Tony Jackson of Oxfam has recently returned from one of the Khmer Rouge camps on the border. He saw United Nations food being packed for onward transmission to the interior.

Where is Pol Pot now? It is no secret that the last recorded sightings of Pol Pot were at the Cardoman mountains inside Cambodia. He has with him a force of about 6,000 men. He and his men are being sustained by United Nations rations. We all contribute food, including the British, American and Japanese Governments. All western countries have contributed to the supplies of food that sustain the Khmer Rouge.

The factor that has sustained the Khmer Rouge most during the past decade has been diplomatic recognition, and a great deal of arm twisting has taken place to secure that. The right hon. Member for Blackpool, South mentioned ASEAN. The ASEAN countries understand that their satellite status is dependent on continuing to toe the line on an extremely unpopular issue.

When I passed through Bangkok last September I stopped off at the Thai Prime Minister's residence for a few hours. It was made clear to me that Thailand was doing everything possible to get out from under, but it cannot do so because it is afraid of the military. Who runs the Thai military? The United States has more control over it than the Thai Prime Minister, as has been demonstrated by the repeated military coups in Thailand over the past 30 years. The Thais are being leaned upon to keep the line.

How can Pol Pot and the other Khmer Rouge leaders come and go from Thailand? Do they use a motor boat to land on some abandoned island? No, they come through Don Muang airport, the main international airport in Bangkok. They use the military section. I am told that Pol Pot has twice been hospitalised in Bangkok. I am told also that at one stage he and the other leaders of the Khmer Rouge had a suite in the Erawan hotel. That hotel has since been demolished. Friends of mine in Bangkok have seen Khmer Rouge leaders in the Liberty hotel in Bangkok. Everybody knows what is going on and it is fraudulent for Ministers to pretend otherwise.

We see a shameful state of affairs. We all realise that we are just bit players, but Britain is being degraded. Decent people of all political persuasions around the world consider that we are being brought into disrespect. I appreciate that whichever Minister replies to the debate will have to read out another brief written by Mr. Colvin and his friends. I hope that when the Ministers return to the Foreign Office they will give him a bollocking and tell him that he should go to the department of folding deck chairs before too long. I trust that their policy on this issue will change.

6.33 pm

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): It is a pity that the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), who challenged the authenticity, veracity and knowledge

of my right hon. and hon. Friends, was not present to hear some of the speeches of my right hon. and hon. Friends for the past 45 minutes.

We have heard precisely what the British Government's policy is on Cambodia. It is clear that Cambodia is being punished because of a grudge against Vietnam. That has been made clear by those who have spoken from the Government Benches. The continuing punishment and isolation of Cambodia can be seen in its children. Those of us who have been to Cambodia on two occasions, such as the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) and I, have seen children in the paediatric hospital in Phnom Penh lying in corridors because there are no beds for them. Others are lying in their mothers' laps because there is nowhere else to put them.

Some of the children we saw were desperately ill. There are children crying in hospital everywhere. Many die from conditions as simple as diarrhoea. They do not get the proper medical care that they should receive. One in five children die of preventable diseases before the age of five. Many die because they drink contaminated water. We have heard described this afternoon what Pol Pot did to Phnom Penh. He went into the city with his Khmer Rouge troops in 1975 and smashed the waterworks.

Sir Robert Jackson, a former United Nations Under-Secretary-General, wrote:

"In a disaster operation, three phases are normally distinguished: relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. In the case of Kampuchea, not even the phase of relief has been advanced to what in other humanitarian operations would be regarded as 'just adequate'. At best it can be said that the lives of the people have been preserved after that holocaust, but no more."

Cambodia is the only country in the world to be denied United Nations development aid, which provides such necessities as a clean water supply, decent sanitation, tractors and irrigation pumps. Cambodia receives practically none of those things because of a 10-year blockade that is led by the United States and China, which is supported by ASEAN and Britain. If the right hon. Member for Blackpool, South would listen, he would understand that that was the mention of ASEAN that he was so anxious to hear.

Few Governments have tried to help by giving money to non-governmental organisations. Oxfam and other agencies have done a tremendous job in Cambodia. As the hon. Member for Broxtowe said, Oxfam is supplying and installing water pumps in rural areas. That work has been exceptionally important, but we can provide only a fraction of what Cambodia really needs.

In June 1989—this is an example of how the United Nations has been unable to carry out its proper function—the United Nations Development Programme sent an exploratory mission to Cambodia. It never got further than Bangkok, because the United States and Japan vetoed the mission.

The hon. Member for Broxtowe and I visited Cambodia for a second time in two years. We have seen how much the country has changed in that period. Many people pin their faith on the Prime Minister of Cambodia, Hun Sen. They believe that he has the most lenient regime in Cambodian modern history. Everyone acknowledges that he is the driving force behind the reforms that have taken place.

The legal system and the constitution have been reformed. If anyone thinks that the hon. Member for Broxtowe and I are stooges of the Cambodian Government, let him or her understand that on two occasions we put searching questions to the Cambodian Government on behalf of Amnesty International because of our concern about human rights in the country. Over the past two years, there have been remarkable improvements, following some of our earlier criticisms. That is true especially of the practice of holding people in detention without trial. The Prime Minister said that he was considering ways of allowing Amnesty International and other international agencies such as the Red Cross to visit prisons in Cambodia.

First, however, Hun Sen has to fight the civil war. He reiterated time after time that he was not heading a Communist regime. He asked, "Tell us where you can see it?" He wants Cambodia to be a non-aligned state. He asked, "Why is it that the West continues to punish the victims, the Cambodian people?"

The United States and the West force Cambodia to depend on the eastern bloc. That is the only way in which the country can breathe. That is a stupid policy and it is high time that the British Government and other western Governments recognised it. I received a telex from the Cambodian Government today, in which they repeat their invitation for a United Nations mission to verify withdrawal. In the event that there is any doubt in anyone's mind, they are inviting that verification.

We have heard much this afternoon of John Pilger. I think that he is responsible more than anyone else for raising the conscience of the British people on this issue. He went to the Foreign Office to discover who were the reasonable people among the Khmer Rouge whom the Prime Minister has mentioned so often. Not to put too fine a point on it, the Minister of State with responsibility for South-East Asia was caught napping. He has the same relationship with South-East Asia as Alice in Wonderland has with nuclear fission.

When asked who were the reasonable elements in the Khmer Rouge, he um-ed and ah-ed and said, "The ones that Prince Sihanouk can work with." "But you must know their names," pressed Mr. Pilger, and the noble Lord's face crumpled like an autumn leaf and he gasped like a dying goldfish. His Foreign Office heavy stepped in to protect him: "Stop this now," he shouted at the cameras. "This is not the way that we were led to believe the line of questioning would go. I think the Minister is doing remarkably well under an aggressive line of questioning that we were not told we had to brief the Minister for." In other words: "It is not fair at all, because we had briefed him to tell a different set of lies."

On 8 November, the Foreign Secretary told the House, the British Press and the public that United Kingdom policy on Cambodia was being modified and that those modifications would be introduced into the draft resolution to be debated at the United Nations on Wednesday 15 November. As my hon. Friends have said, that resolution has been altered by only two words.

Not only has the Foreign Secretary attempted to mislead the House and the country, but we are faced with two conflicting statements of United Kingdom policy on Cambodia. First, the Foreign Secretary and the Minister state that Vietnam has withdrawn its combat units from Cambodia, but the draft resolution states only that it deplores

"foreign armed intervention and occupation in Kampuchea."

The Foreign Secretary 's statement cites the Khmer Rouge six times and makes clear the Government's condemnation

[Mrs. Ann Clwyd]

and opposition to their return to power. However, the draft resolution, which the United Kingdom is co-sponsoring on Wednesday, contains no explicit condemnation of the Khmer Rouge, nor any statement condemning its return to power. Indeed, there is no reference by name to the Khmer Rouge anywhere in the United Nations resolution.

Such deviations would not make much difference if all that was at stake was a ritual debate at the United Nations, but the implications of such a resolution which disregards the changes which have taken place in Cambodia ensures that the Khmer Rouge continue to enjoy the prestige of their United Nations seat.

The Foreign Secretary's statement—

"We have never given and will never give, support of any kind to the Khmer Rouge"—

is a deliberate attempt to mislead the House. We voted three times—in 1979, 1980 and 1981—to seat the Khmer Rouge at the United Nations. Since 1982, we have not challenged the seating of the coalition controlled by the Khmer Rouge at the United Nations.

That is why a challenge to those who occupy that seat at the United Nations is an important symbol to the people of Cambodia. They cannot understand, and nor can the Opposition, why nations such as Britain should be party to such a situation. It is as though West Germany's seat at the United Nations was occupied by Himmler, and the swastika flew at New York. Britain has therefore voted to keep the Khmer Rouge in the United Nations, ensuring it international recognition and prestige, access to funds and a right of veto in major United Nations humanitarian agencies.

As we have heard, the coalition is made up of former Khmer Rouge murderers and include Khieu Samphan who was head of state and presided over the mass killings in 1976-80, and Thioun Prasith, a top Khmer Rouge official during the killing fields years, whose job was to tempt back from overseas Khmer intellectuals, who were then murdered in Cambodia.

In his statement on 8 November, the Foreign Secretary said that the credentials committee of the United Nations had approved the credentials of democratic Kampuchea and that was the end of the matter. But again, that is not entirely accurate. Any country, at any time during this week's debate, can challenge the representation of Cambodia by war criminals who were their murderers only 10 years ago. Many western countries are looking for a major player at the United Nations to take a lead. Britain has a chance to speak on behalf of a small nation that has been bombed, murdered and devastated over the past 20 years.

Since when has Britain slavishly supported mass murderers? It needs only one country—how wonderful it would be if Britain were that country—to stand up to the Chinese and American pressure which is silencing everyone else. The United Kingdom has been on the wrong side of this dirty war. Over the past 10 years, the policy of the West has been to get the Vietnamese to leave. Now we admit that they have gone, it is no longer logical to support the seating of the coalition at the United Nations or the resolution.

We need a radical rethink of our policy to release aid to Cambodia and to Vietnam. It is now illogical and dangerous to pursue the old American policy of bleeding Vietnam white on the battlefields of Cambodia.

The Khmer Rouge have taken Pailin, an important strategic town. Their forces are reported to be about 30 miles from Battambang, the second largest city in Cambodia. We are not dealing with a fanciful possibility; we are standing on the sidelines watching mass murderers on the march. The killing has started again. According to a Chinese source, 17,000 are dead and the Khmer Rouge have knocked out a crack Government battalion, and they intend to purge 300,000 Cambodians. Even more sinister, Pol Pot is back in Cambodia. Oxfam representatives who returned from Thailand at the weekend have been told that Pol Pot is in Cambodia and is in charge of 6,000 troops, having successfully captured Pailin. The border refugee camps are preparing for war and sending soldiers to the front. There is no doubt that those camps are a prime source of sanctuary and supplies for the Khmer Rouge.

In August 1988, the Prime Minister, in a visit to the camps on the Thai-Cambodia border, made a ringing declaration:

"The Vietnamese must go, but we must not allow the return of the terrible Pol Pot regime in their place. No civilised country could accept that."

The Vietnamese have gone and we have a chance at the United Nations this week to show whether we are a civilised country. There is still time. If ever there was a time for consensus, this is it. I appeal to Conservative Members to heed the common-sense voices of the British people. Three and a half thousand people have written to the Foreign Secretary, 1,500 have written to the Prime Minister and hundreds have written to right hon. and hon. Members. Unless we act, we shall be accused of a shameful and shocking stain on Britain's foreign policy.

Finally, I shall quote one paragraph from a letter I received:

"I write to you as a private individual. I am a member of no political party and have no vested interest. I am only a human being . . . Cambodia receives no aid, Vietnam receives no aid, yet Pol Pot receives aid. Great Britain is a founder member of the United Nations and a member of the Security Council yet we do nothing. A nation that talks so proudly of previous conflicts against tyranny sits back whilst the key to the killing fields is returned to Pol Pot. I implore you. In the name of humanity, DO SOMETHING."

6.49 pm

The Minister for Overseas Development (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): Like my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave), I very much welcome the debate. It is important to place on the record exactly what is happening, and in the short time available, I shall do my best to do so.

Our objective is clear and consistent—an independent and sovereign Cambodia. We want to see peace and stability restored to Cambodia through a comprehensive political settlement, which must create the conditions in which its people can elect a Government of their choice free from fear of Khmer Rouge atrocities, foreign occupation or civil war. Our repugnance of the Pol Pot/Khmer Rouge regime is well known. We have never given it, and will never give it, support of any kind.

In the light of the false statements made by the hon. Members for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) and for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing), I want to put in context the humanitarian help that we are giving. Humanitarian aid is

being given to people inside Cambodia. In 1988, we contributed £250,000 to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund programme on humanitarian activities in Cambodia, and £100,000 to a special appeal by the Food and Agriculture Organisation. We continue to help, and last week we announced a further £250,000 for UNICEF. In the past year, we have contributed nearly £1 million to UNICEF, the FAO and British non-governmental organisations, which is being distributed to people inside Cambodia. That sum was in addition to the £13·7 million that was given to Cambodians in the border area.

After the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, Britain was the first country to give humanitarian aid to the camps. We believe that that was important and right. Hon. Members asked whether humanitarian aid for people in the camps is being given to groups other than the Khmer Rouge. We rely on assurances from NGOs and international organisations that British aid is being given directly to non-Communist refugees. Indeed, it is given only to camps controlled by the two non-Communist factions led by Son Sann and Prince Sihanouk. At the Foreign Secretaries' meeting tomorrow, I shall follow that up with British NGOs and other organisations to ensure that aid is being given only to non-Communist refugees in the camps.

We shall continue to help through the United Nations border relief operation, by which help is given to non-Communist refugees, and in other ways to ensure that the needs of the Cambodian people inside and outside Cambodia are met. We are determined that humanitarian aid should be given to those who truly need it, so I am considering the position anew, which I began to do last week before the Foreign Secretary's announcement.

Mr. Dalyell: Statements were made about British military help for South Korea during the olympic games and for help with the drugs problem in Colombia. What is the position on British military aid for Cambodia? Will the Minister clear this up?

Mrs. Chalker: That question has been asked many times before in the House. Both the Labour Government and the present Government——

Mr. Dalyell: South Korea, Mozambique——

Mrs. Chalker: Will the hon. Gentleman let me finish? We have been helping Colombia with its serious drugs problem. The question asked about Cambodia concerns the special forces. Neither previous Labour Governments nor this Conservative Government have commented on the use of special forces, and I have no intention of doing so now.

May I deal with the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester), who made a valuable speech this evening and who has shown his care and concern for the Cambodian people? I may not agree with all that my hon. Friend says, but I thank him for all the work that he has done.

The answer to the question that my hon. Friend posed on 8 November is that there has been no fundamental policy shift; the statement does not contain the untruths that the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) suggested. The statement was clear, and we all know, as my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe said, that circumstances have changed in Cambodia. We have responded to take account of those changes. The current position in Cambodia is complex and changes frequently, but we must respond to it. Our most effective contribution —the answer given by the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe endorsed this—is to concentrate not only on providing humanitarian aid but on promoting a comprehensive political settlement.

Many hon. Members mentioned Cambodia's seat at the United Nations. Britain's record is consistent. We voted for the annual United Nations General Assembly resolution, which was drafted by the Association of South-East Asian Nations, because we believed it right to do so. Our aim is a peaceful, independent Cambodia, whose people can decide their own future. With our friends and partners, we sought and agreed certain changes to this year's draft resolution. We made it clear not only that circumstances have changed but that we wished to remove any implication that we support the Khmer Rouge. We do not and shall not do so.

This year's amended resolution has attracted 75 co-sponsors, because it endorses the need for a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia and condemns the Pol Pot regime. Voting in previous years suggests that well over 100 United Nations member states are likely to vote for it in the General Assembly debate this week. I do not believe that greater changes would have received such widespread support. The debate will not address Cambodia's representation at the United Nations, which was settled on 17 October when the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, the report of the United Nations credentials committee for the forthcoming year. At a future United Nations session, we shall have to return to the question of who occupies Cambodia's seat.

Only two countries stated any reservations in the report of the credentials committee—Byelorussia, which is one of the ways that Russia has three votes, and Laos. They stated a number of reservations on behalf of themselves and their allies about the acceptance of Democratic Kampuchea's credentials. No other country stated reservations——

Mr. Wareing: Why not?

Mrs. Chalker: Would the hon. Gentleman allow me to finish the point?

We stated that our position on credentials did not imply support for Pol Pot or the Khmer Rouge, and we made it absolutely clear that we wished to return to the subject. It is not true that the occupation of Cambodia's UN seat by the coalition Government of Democratic Cambodia prevents the UN from contributing humanitarian relief inside Cambodia. UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees are active, and I am certain that they will take further action.

We believe that a comprehensive political settlement that will enable the Cambodian people to elect a Government of their choice is the best way of achieving peace. If we were to exclude, as some people have suggested, the Khmer Rouge from the peace process, it would drive them further into a guerrilla war and would make free and fair elections impossible, which is why we have backed the judgment of those who support all four

[Mrs. Chalker]

factions getting around the table. Clearly, there is no place in Cambodia's future for Pol Pot or the murderous Khmer Rouge.

If Prince Sihanouk's judgment changed or he were no longer there, we would still need to bring all the parties to the conference table. Britain will give humanitarian aid directly to the people of Cambodia, as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said in his answer last week. Equally vital is our work, beyond any United Nations debate, with our partners for a comprehensive political settlement. It has to be——

Mr. Derek Foster (Bishop Auckland) *rose in his place, and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to.*

Question put accordingly, That the original words stand part of the Question:—

The House divided: Ayes, 192, Noes 258.

Division No. 402] **[7 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen

Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Nicholas Baker.

Question accordingly negatived.

Question, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments):—*

The House divided: Ayes 253, Noes 189.

Division No. 403] **[7.14 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.

Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, Sir John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Nicholas Baker.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Short, Clare
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter

Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'Yord)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

Question accordingly agreed to.

MR. SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

Resolved,

That this House welcomes the Government's consistent refusal to give support to either the PRK or the murderous Khmer Rouge; commends its commitment to finding a peaceful and comprehensive settlement endorsed by the Cambodian people; and welcomes the increased assistance which the Government is providing for the innocent victims of this tragic conflict.

Birmingham City Council (No. 2) Bill

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That the Promoters of the Birmingham City Council (No. 2) Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

7.27 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It has been brought to my attention that a Birmingham evening paper has reported that there have been behind-the-scenes negotiations about the Bill. Would not such a report cast a slur on the Chairman of Ways and Means, who, as I understand it, should adopt a completely neutral view? The report suggested that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) used his influence to bring this motion on the Bill before the House and that if he had not, he would have found it more difficult to obtain support in the House. That implies that the hon. Gentleman has special influence.

I am sure that that must be wrong, because any promoter of a private Bill has the same influence as any other and can obtain the same prominence for his Bill. I am sure that the article is misleading. Will you assure us that it is fallacious and that the hon. Gentleman has not done a deal behind closed doors and thereby trampled on the rights of Parliament?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I shall deal with this point first. I am not sure whether the hon. Member is saying that there might be a prima facie breach of privilege. If so, he knows the procedure and should write to Mr. Speaker. The sooner that we continue with the debate, the sooner all will be revealed.

Mr. Denis Howell (Birmingham, Small Heath): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can you advise the House whether it is in order for one of my hon. Friends to advise all Labour Members to go home and not to participate in the private business, as he did in a loud voice in the Division Lobby just now? I find that action reprehensible.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is a matter of tactics and has nothing to do with the Chair.

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would you place on record the fact that there is no obligation on hon. Members to attend and listen to debates prior to voting? Moreover, there is never an official view on private business. There is never a view from a Government Whip or an Opposition Whip, so it is left to individual Members to advise their colleagues of the importance to be attached to that business. As I said earlier today, we ought to be debating the changing boundaries of Europe rather than the wasting of ratepayers' money on a road race. The European people will not understand the way in which the British Parliament is conducting its business today.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At long last the House has shown its willingness to debate a private Bill at a sensible time. As a rule, the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) rages and rants about the rights of the House and private Bills, yet now we find that he is an avid reader of the *Birmingham Post* all of a sudden. That is a very good thing, because it is a first-class newspaper but I do not know what that publication has to do with Bradford—unless the hon. Gentleman's remarks emanated from some other Birmingham Member.

The Chairman of Ways and Means and the Panel should be applauded for the fact that, at long last, private Bills are given prime time. I do not wish to offend the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) whom I look upon as a friend in a Birmingham sense, but his claim that we should be discussing the problems of Europe —or Cambodia or outer Mongolia or outer space—rather then the problems of Birmingham and his imputation of the motives of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) should bring shame to the hon. Gentleman's eyes and tears to ours.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We are already launched into the debate. It would be far better to conduct it in the regular manner than by means of points of order.

Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East): Further to the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is not normal for me to intervene at such an early stage, but I must comment on the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), who alleged that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King)—has used his influence improperly——

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I have not.

Mr. Snape: I have not finished yet.

The implication was that the hon. Gentleman used his influence to bring the Bill before us tonight. I must rush to the hon. Gentleman's defence. I must tell my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South that, if the hon. Member for Northfield had any influence, he would long since have arrived on the Government Front Bench—a role that he has been seeking with passion since the day he was elected. I cannot really believe that he has any influence.

On the point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell), who said that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) had been standing in the Division Lobby urging hon. Members to go home, I can only say, as an ex-Whip, that it strikes me as odd that someone of my hon. Friend's competence should waste his time on such duties, which are extraneous, to say the least. It has always appeared to me that hon. Members do not need too much encouragement to leave this place when they have the opportunity. I do not think that my hon. Friend the Member for Perry Barr has done much to change matters.

Mr. Frank Haynes (Ashfield) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it a point of order?

Mr. Haynes: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a point of order.

I have been working. I have been a Teller at the door of the Lobby. I do not know what has been going on in there, but I do know what has been happening for the past few moments. I am a bit surprised that you did not challenge the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark). We are wasting time and we should get on with the business.—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear!"] I am supporting the occupant of the Chair. I am a little surprised that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did not have a go at the hon. Member for Selly Oak for wasting time. I am always here, but he is hardly ever here. More often than not he is flying around in a jumbo jet somewhere. I am a little surprised that you let him carry on because he was wasting time and he is usually one to complain about waste of time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) is seeking to catch my eye and I now call him. Mr. Roger King.

7.36 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I am somewhat flattered by the accusations concerning my ability to influence the operations of the House. I only wish that that were true, but those who know will know that I have not been party to any negotiations directly—[HON. MEMBERS: "Indirectly?"]—or even indirectly. I have had nothing to do with them. The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) does me an honour by even suggesting that I have such influence. What the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) said is true to an extent. That is why I sit on the second row—I am but one row from the front.

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. King: It is early in my remarks and I do not want to take more than a few moments. Last time we debated the Bill the hon. Lady rightly pointed out that we had taken an awful long time to explain its intricacies and had allowed a large number of interventions, which cost her the opportunity to speak. Nevertheless, I give way to the hon. Lady.

Ms. Short: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would not want to say different things in the House and in the Birmingham press. Will he confirm the report in the Birmingham press which said that delicate negotiations behind the scenes had brought the time forward so that there would be 100 hon. Members present to carry the Bill? Will he confirm that he said:

> "I do not anticipate any problems in getting 100 colleagues to support this measure. We are very, very confident."

He should not say different things here and to the press, as that is dishonourable behaviour.

Mr. King: I am confident that the necessary number of hon. Members will be here. There has been a change in the timetable, but I stand by what I said—in terms of negotiations, I have not been involved. That is perfectly fair and honest.

Let us move on to the object of our debate, which is the progress of the Bill. The subject has received considerable debate over the years. The Birmingham City Council (No. 1) Bill, which authorised motor racing in Birmingham, received much debate, with further debate on Second Reading and in Committee. On Second Reading, on Tuesday 18 April 1989, 145 Members voted for the Bill to be read a Second time and 24 voted against. That was a significant majority and reflects the overwhelming desire on the part of the city of Birmingham. Out of 65 councillors who voted, 30 Labour councillors and 31 Conservative councillors were in favour of the Bill. Sixteen Conservative and Labour councillors were against and four members of minority parties registered their disapproval.

At that time there were eight petitioners objecting to the Bill. In the usual manner, the promoters—the city council—have discussed objections with all the petitioners prepared to negotiate. Undertakings were reached with all but three.

The Committee met in May, with seven days of hearings and one site visit. The Committee heard evidence from representatives of the National and Local Government Officers Association, a residents association from the area of the race circuit and a residents association from somewhat further afield. The outcome of the deliberations was a number of amendments to the Bill, accepted by the promoter and to be considered by the House should the Bill be carried over. These are:

"1. An acceptance that four days of racing would only be for Grand Prix racing, and that a three day event would be part of a Bank Holiday.

2. The reinstituting of strict liability for personal injuries or damage to property, except for competitors.

3. Streets being closed from 7.30 am to 7.30 pm, rather than 6.00 am to 8.00 pm"

as originally proposed.

"4. Equipment should be dismantled within 10 days after the event, not 20. Moreover, all work should take place between 8 am and 8 pm.

5. A reinstituting of the agreement to pay all police costs."

In addition——

Mr. Rooker: If the hon. Gentleman has finished his list——

Mr. King: No, I have not.

In addition, the Committee has the agreement of the city council to the following 11 undertakings:

"1. That, for a period of four weeks before the race and two weeks afterwards, the Council sets up a telephone call-line to provide full information to residents in relation to the road race and to record any complaints regarding the road race, so that immediate action may be taken.

2. That there should be an increased provision of security patrols both for local residents and businesses.

3. There should be an increased provision of parking areas for local residents when the circuit streets are closed, to reduce the distance between residents and their cars.

4. That religious worship should take place during the racing period without any undue interference.

5. That the River-Rea subway crossing should be brought into use as a circuit crossing point at the earliest opportunity, and that it should so constructed as to enable disabled persons to cross at this point.

6. That underpass crossings should be made more welcoming, kept clean and well lit, and be clearly marked.

7. That the disabled should not at any point be prejudiced in gaining access to and from the road race area.

8. That in any of its future building projects, or major repair works to existing buildings, within close proximity to the race circuit, the Council should consider installing double glazing.

9. That the Council should strive to introduce permanent, rather than temporary, beautification features on the circuit.

10. That there should be an increased number of manned crossing gates in the circuit area.

11. That noise levels should be measured at various parts of the circuit, and that the records of such measurements should be available for public consultation."

We believe that those amendments and undertakings go a considerable way towards easing the inconvenience of local residents and businesses.

Mr. Rooker: I hope that the hon. Gentleman has finished his list. He was speaking rather quickly and I did not hear anything about stopping the illegal use of ratepayers' money to fund the revenue account. We have had undertakings before. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) is effectively in charge of the Bill. If he has not been involved in the negotiations about the Bill, but he promoted its Second Reading, can he tell us who has been involved in the negotiations, so that we know where to direct our representations?

Mr. King: I do not understand the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Rooker: A few moments ago, in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short), the hon. Gentleman said that he had not been involved in any negotiations. He clearly implied that other people or other hon. Members had been involved. The hon. Member for Northfield is the promoters' man on the Floor of the House. He moved the Bill and he is effectively in charge of it. Who has been responsible in this House for the negotiations about the Bill and its timetable?

Mr. King: The city council, as is its right, made representations. I was expecting the Bill to be debated at a different time this week, but was informed that it would be debated this evening. I cannot go into the exact details, because I was not privy to them.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does not my hon. Friend find the allegations from Opposition Members of some kind of impropriety, almost of dishonesty, quite amazing? Has not the council in our city of Birmingham, through no will of ours, a large Labour majority? Is it right that hon. Members should accuse a Labour council of dishonesty? Is it possible that we should agree with Labour Members that it is dishonest? Is this not a proper Bill for the benefit of Birmingham, and is that why all the Conservative Members representing Birmingham constituencies are doing their best to help it to make progress against the opposition from some of the laggards on the Opposition Benches?

Mr. King: My hon. Friend has made his point extremely well.

Ms. Short: The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) heard what I said. Perhaps he has not read Friday's edition of the *Birmingham Post*. It is clear from that article that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) is claiming full knowledge of the negotiations to bring the time for the Bill forward so that he could—*[Interruption]* It is obvious from the article that the hon. Member for Northfield is

[Ms. Short]

claiming full knowledge of the negotiations and is confident that the Bill will be carried. He has said in the House today that he knows nothing about that. In that case, he was dishonest, either to the *Birmingham Post* or in the Chamber today.

Mr. King: I should have thought that the best service that anyone could provide in the debate would be to allow it to proceed without examining that particular issue. Nothing will be gained from that, except a loss of time to debate the issues which undoubtedly the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) would like to raise.

All matters relating to private Bills are very provisional. We are all anxious to ascertain when such a measure will come before the House. As a sponsor of the Bill, it would be part of my job to try to determine when the debate will take place. The support and the hon. Members who want to speak must be organised and we must adjust our timetable accordingly. I was given to understand that the Bill would be debated on a different day this week. However, presumably as a result of normal parliamentary procedures that are adopted in relation to any private Bill, the timetable was adjusted to this evening.

Clearly negotiations took place between certain individuals—no doubt supporters of the Bill—who made their voices adequately known. I know that there is no record of any letter from me or any verbal approach to anyone in authority in order to change the timetable. When the timetable has been changed, as it has, that must have happened as a result of negotiations.

Mr. Snape: I am always anxious to help the hon. Gentleman, as he knows. As the hon. Gentleman so wisely said, perhaps he did not put anything down on paper. However, perhaps he would agree that a conversation took place, perhaps with Mr. Nigel Hastilow, the esteemed reporter from the *Birmingham Post*, during which the hon. Gentleman might have verballed Mr. Hastilow that perhaps his influence was so great in this place that the business had been changed. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that that might not be an unreal version of what happened last Thursday?

Mr. King: I wish that I could confirm that I have that kind of power and authority. Alas, I have not. I was not a party to negotiations. I remained deliberately on one side because I did not want to have these aspersions cast upon me. Negotiations have presumably taken place between some individuals, and perhaps some people here today, were part and parcel of them, but I cannot say who they are.

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): As someone who is disinterested, but not uninterested, in the progress of the Bill, does the city council of Birmingham with its Labour majority supported by a Conservative minority want this Bill? Do the majority of Birmingham Members want the Bill? If that is so, I might be one of the 100 hon. Members required to see it through the Lobby at 10 pm. No one has asked me about it, but if that is the case, I do not believe that Birmingham Members are doing their great city much good by these childish exchanges.

Mr. King: That is exactly the case. It is a city of Birmingham Bill. It has all-party support, and the city leader, Sir Richard Knowles, is 100 per cent. behind it, as are all other city leaders and the Conservative opposition group. The reasons for that support are self-evident, having regard to the four events that have taken place so far and what they have brought to the city. They have indirectly made the city a centre of attraction. There has been wide international media coverage. Investment in the city of Birmingham is now about £1·5 billion—a substantial investment—entirely due to the city council's attitude to attracting business and investment from all over the globe. The council is to be congratulated.

The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) referred to the financial arrangements of the Bill. They were not discussed in Committee. In the hon. Gentleman's opinion, that matter must be debated further. The carry-over motion will allow us to do just that next year. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will be as keen as ever to introduce the necessary amendments and give us his ideas on how the Bill should be changed for the better. He will not serve the House by delaying the Bill's passage if he wants to debate its financial aspects.

Mr. Rooker: There is an excellent case for starting the Bill again and for not agreeing the carry-over motion. The questions that Opposition Members have asked about finance have been asked by senior Birmingham Tories. The hon. Gentleman owes it to his hon. Friends to raise the same doubts about financial arrangements as the Opposition have raised. Those doubts were raised also by Conservative members of the council. Labour Members opposed the Bill in the first place by a free vote. The matter is not neat and tidy. The Bill would benefit from our starting it again.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned the carry-over motion. Will he explain the different paragraphs, particularly the last one, and tell us how much has been spent to get the Bill this far? As that is a necessary detail of the carry-over motion, an explanation should be put on the record.

Mr. King: I do not have the exact figures to hand, but I will try to obtain them before the end of the debate and let the hon. Gentleman know, if he is successful in catching your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not doubt that the costs are considerable, which is why the city of Birmingham would not relish starting the passage of the Bill again. The hon. Gentleman's tactics would not be warmly applauded by the ratepayers or community charge payers. The hon. Gentleman is correct to say that the Conservative group on the city of Birmingham council will not necessarily give the Labour council a blank cheque. They have their own interests in ensuring accountability and are of the opinion that the motor race must continue to develop and produce a profit for the city. The motor race has been successful in terms of investment in the city.

I do not dispute that the Conservative opposition on the council are not happy about certain financial aspects. However, they are 100 per cent. behind continuing the event and see no reason why their detailed financial concerns should cause the measure to be dropped and the motor race not allowed to continue.

Mr. Robin Corbett (Birmingham, Erdington): The hon. Gentleman was saying that he is unaware of the allocation of fees for the passage of both Bills. I understand that the figure agreed by the city council was £100,000. There has been no subsequent discussion or decision on whether extra moneys must be allocated.

Mr. King: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) for those figures. I hope that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr has duly noted them.

The city of Birmingham believes that it is worth continuing this event and that, as the Bill wends its way through Parliament, all aspects of the motor race will be discussed. Many worthwhile amendments have already been undertaken or promised by the local authority to make the event more relevant and more responsive to the local community.

Mr. Harry Barnes (Derbyshire, North-East): The hon. Gentleman listed several decisions that were made in Committee. It would have been helpful if copies of those decisions were available. Certain points arise from the council's minutes of 21 June. Obviously, changes occurred as the Committee proceeded. There is a list of 12 points, but the hon. Gentleman mentioned only 11. A change occurred later. There is no published list. We have had only a verbal presentation, and that seems to be a general problem with private Bills.

The hon. Gentleman's most important point about the Birmingham (No. 2) Bill is the possibility of a grand prix being held in Birmingham. He mentioned a four-day race ending on a Sunday. That matter was decided by a majority in Committee, whereas the other decisions were unanimous.

Mr. King: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's intervention. We are not debating the Committee's report. That will occur in due course if consideration of the Bill is allowed to be carried over into the next Session. The list that I read out is the list to which the city has undertaken to commit itself as a result of the Committee's deliberations. Of course, it is subject to amendment and ratification by the House. I have been trying to say that real progress has been made.

If the House agrees that consideration of the Birmingham (No. 2) Bill should be carried over to the next Session, all requirements and other items in respect of the grand prix and the Committee's decision by casting vote will be fully discussed.

Mr. Rooker: The hon. Gentleman is effectively in charge of the Bill, but he has no list of possible changes. Opposition Members have received no communication from the council about the Bill since Second Reading, other than a brief exchange of letters. There has been nothing of substance. The hon. Gentleman has said that certain matters will be debated. Would the hon. Gentleman prefer to debate changes rather than allow the Bill to pass without further debate? Is the hon. Gentleman prepared to say that he would rather do that? The hon. Gentleman knows, as does everyone else, that the only way in which the changes can be debated is for us to object procedurally each time the Bill comes before the House so that we can create space in the parliamentary programme. However, whenever my hon. Friends and I do that, we are pilloried by prejudiced and spiteful media and by senior Tory councillors in Birmingham for simply carrying out our parliamentary duties.

Mr. King: I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's last point. The press can look after themselves, but the comments and criticisms made by the Conservatives on Birmingham city council have been most discreet. They could have been much more vociferous if they had had a mind. The supporters of the Bill are ever mindful that, even at this late stage, we could all move together, as Birmingham Members of Parliament. We are mindful of the changes that the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) introduced to ensure that the Bill received a long stint of examination in the Select Committee. Indeed, the Bill is all the better for that. The recommendations that have been made were put forward after a lengthy period of deliberation and if there are any further changes that the hon. Gentleman would like to introduce, I am sure that he will have the opportunity of making his views known.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will remember that he has made that statement once before. When the previous Bill passed through the House and ultimately became an Act of Parliament, the hon. Gentleman said that it had been much improved as a result of the opposition of my hon. Friends and myself. He said that the amendment that was introduced by Sir Reginald Eyre, on behalf of the city council, which stated that the race would stop if it had not made a cumulative profit after five years, much improved the Bill, yet he has connived at sidestepping that Act.

Mr. King: I do not accept that. I know that we have faced a contradiction or a difficulty in the meeting of minds about the financial structure of the motor race. The hon. Gentleman voiced his grave concern about that on Second Reading, and the city has obviously taken note of the points that he made. No doubt if the House is agreeable to the carry-over motion, he will have the opportunity at a later stage to continue to voice his points of view and to seek to make changes wherever and whenever he can. I understand and fully appreciate his right so to do.

My point is that the city has tried to reach accommodation with all the people who have petitioned for change, and we may wait and see——

Mr. Terry Davis: Before the hon. Gentleman leaves that point, will he tell the House that the amendments pressed on the Bill are to be welcomed because they improve it? The hon. Gentleman made the same sort of statement four years ago and is now party to sidestepping that provision. Indeed, "sidestepping" is the word used by the city solicitor.

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman knows why this No. 2 Bill is before the House this evening. When the original Bill was approved by the House, we were not aware of the change in the rules that the international motor racing body, FISA, was to introduce into the form of motor racing staged by the city. I refer to the necessity of having two days for practice and one day for the actual race when, at the moment, all that we can have is one day of practice and one day for the race. It is for that reason and that reason alone that this Bill has come before the House.

At the same time, we are taking the opportunity of reviewing the circuit and making some alterations to it. It is also a good opportunity for petitioners and for those who have experienced problems with the motor race to come forward and to ask the city council to agree to a number of amendments. Indeed, the city has accepted such amendments. That is the way in which the Bill has been improved. As a result, it is a better Bill and more responsive to the citizens of Birmingham as a whole.

Mr. Denis Howell: On the narrow point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), which is effectively the only business before the House tonight, we are considering whether the Bill, which has now had its Second Reading and Committee stages should—because of the difficulties of the parliamentary timetable—be carried over. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that if the Bill were carried over, the rights of hon. Members to move amendments and to make objections would properly continue, so that all that hon. Members are doing by objecting to the Bill this evening is frustrating the normal parliamentary procedures of democracy? They are stopping the Bill from being argued on its merits, although I accept that that is what my hon. Friends say that they wish to do, but the end of that process will be to cost the city of Birmingham and its ratepayers another £100,000 if we start again—and that is both parliamentary and economic nonsense.

Mr. King: The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) is perfectly right. One difficulty that I face at the moment is asking for a carry-over motion when we are only halfway through the Bill's progress. Of course, there are questions still to be asked and points still to be raised—I do not doubt that for one moment—and that is precisely why we need the carry-over motion. It will mean that those points can be debated during our remaining sittings on the Bill——

Mr. Terry Davis *rose*——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Not again.

Mr. Davis: Yes, again, because this is an important matter. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) is making one of his rare appearances in the Chamber, but I want to press his hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King), who has been here throughout our debates. The hon. Member for Northfield has said that he is proposing the carry-over motion to allow my hon. Friends and me to put forward our amendments and objections to the Bill. If the hon. Gentleman is so anxious for the Bill to be thoroughly debated, why did he move the closure motion to prevent my hon. Friends from taking part in the last debate?

Mr. King: At the end of our Second Reading debate, it was clear that that debate was centring on the financial aspects——

Ms. Short: The hon. Gentleman did not give me a chance to speak then.

Mr. King: Obviously, those financial aspects caused concern to some hon. Members. During that debate we had an element of disruption because of the number of questions asked although I was happy to seek to address those questions because the Bill is contentious and Opposition Members had every right to intervene to ask their many and varied questions during my description of the Bill——

Ms. Short *rose*——

Mr. King: I shall give way, but this is the last time.

Ms. Short: The hon. Gentleman is well aware that I waited in the Chamber throughout the whole of his hour-long speech and that I was the only hon. Member seeking to speak through whose constituency the race runs. The hon. Gentleman must be aware that my constituents have strong feelings about this. Yet he was a party to preventing me from speaking and to preventing the House from hearing what my constituents had to say.

Mr. King: The record will show that there were about 24 interventions in my speech when I presented the No. 2 Bill. The hon. Lady made several interventions on a variety of matters and I was delighted to assist her in every way that I could. It is not for me to comment on the Chair and who is called, but other hon. Members were called on that occasion. Personally, I am sorry that the hon. Lady was not called, but it is not within my power to seek to have her called. Nevertheless, if the opportunity presents itself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I very much hope that the hon. Lady will catch your eye later this evening.

The measure having come all this way, the best course that anyone could adopt would be to allow the No. 2 Bill to be carried over into the next Session so that the many points still at issue will receive due and careful consideration. To abandon the Bill now would be disappointing for the city of Birmingham and its citizens, who in the last four events of the super prix have seen the benefits that it can bring. One accepts that this matter is not without controversy, but I believe that the measures taken by the city and those already laid down in the Bill—which, of course, need to be ratified and confirmed—show that the city wants to stage the event with the willing support and agreement of its citizens.

8.9 pm

Ms. Clare Short (Birmingham, Ladywood): It is my strong view that the House should not give permission for the Bill to be carried over into the next Session, because it is deeply flawed. The power already exists for a two-day road race to be held in Birmingham, but that power requires the road race to break even in five years. I shall describe later how that requirement of the House has been disregarded. The flawed Bill before us gives the power necessary to hold a four-day road race, with no requirement to break even. That is a disgrace, and it is one major reason why the Bill should not be carried over.

My first objection to the carry-over motion, however, relates to the way in which the Bill has been handled in the House. It was introduced by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King). He spoke for more than an hour, and I sat through his speech waiting to make my own. It is not good enough for that hon. Gentleman to talk about the number of interventions in his speech—in fact there were far more interventions in the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell), who spoke for a shorter time.

Mr. Denis Howell: I counted the number of interventions that my hon. Friend made in my speech. In my 30 years in the House, I have never had so many interventions in such a short speech. I am glad, however, that my hon. Friend has had the opportunity to speak tonight.

Ms. Short: My right hon. Friend is obviously not listening. I said that there were far more interventions in his speech—I agree that I made many of them—than in the speech of the hon. Member for Northfield.

The hon. Member for Northfield spoke at enormous length, and a large part of his speech was irrelevant to the Bill. He went on and on about the convention centre and

the failed olympic bid—I do not want to trample on the feelings of my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath—and said how everything was hunky-dory in Birmingham. That was before the publication of the document on poverty in Birmingham, which shows that half the people in that city live in serious poverty. The hon. Gentleman, however, went on and on with his glorious picture of Birmingham, which was absolutely irrelevant to the road race. The hon. Gentleman took up too much time in that debate, and he was largely responsible for the views of my constituents not being put to the House before the Bill went into Committee.

In that debate, my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) spoke about the finances behind the Bill, which are an important part of our objection to it. After my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill spoke, my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath and the Minister made brief speeches. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) then got up and was just getting into his stride when who came into the Chamber but the Government Chief Whip. He walked up to the hon. Member for Yardley, whose speech came to an abrupt halt. The hon. Gentleman nearly fell on the floor the instant the Chief Whip went up to him. The hon. Gentleman was obviously instructed to bring his speech to a rapid conclusion, which he did with total obedience——

Mr. David Gilroy Bevan (Birmingham, Yardley): And loyalty to Birmingham.

Ms. Short: I have no doubt that the hon. Gentleman intended to make a long speech, but when the Chief Whip appeared and started to walk up the steps towards him he brought his remarks to a close instantly. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perr Barr (Mr. Rooker) then stood up to speak, but he did not get much of a chance to do so before the closure was moved.

I do not wish to embarrass the Chair in any way, but it had been intimated—if I may put it like that—that, because the hon. Member for Northfield had spoken at such length and because the views of the people who live in the area where the road race takes place had not been put before the House, it was unlikely that the closure would be granted. The Chief Whip then arrived, however, went up to the hon. Member for Yardley and then appeared to have words with the people who make decisions about whether a closure can be given. Shortly afterwards, that closure was given.

The procedural way in which the Bill has been handled has been unacceptable. It is obvious that the Government Chief Whip organised the votes for the closure to get the Bill through the Chamber. The husband of the Prime Minister has a financial interest in Halfords, which is a major sponsor of the road race. He has been to Birmingham to show his support for the road race, and he enjoyed the hospitality, of which there is plenty, given to prestigious visitors to the road race. I believe that there has been improper interference with the procedures of this House. There has not been proper consideration of the interests of the people of Birmingham, who are opposed to the passage of the Bill.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Is my hon. Friend telling the House that Burmah Oil is short for Birmingham Oil?

Ms. Short: No, I am not. I was just saying that the Prime Minister's husband has a financial interest in the company that sponsors the road race. It is obvious from the proceedings in the previous debate that the Chief Whip organised to abbreviate the debate to ensure that there was a closure, which was overwhelmingly carried by Conservative Members.

Mr. Corbett: I appreciate the complaints that my hon. Friend makes about the way in which the House handles such matters. My hon. Friend should go back a step, however, to recall that the Bill was approved on a free vote by the majority of elected councillors of the city of Birmingham. Is my hon. Friend saying that those councillors, irrespective of party, totally ignored the wishes of the people they represent?

Ms. Short: No, I am not. I do not know how much detailed information some councillors had when they voted in favour of the Bill. I doubt that they have had as much detailed information about the finances and about some of the undertakings given in the House when the first Bill was passed as is available to hon. Members because of procedures relating to the passage of the Bill.

Mr. Rooker: Through my hon. Friend, perhaps I can ask my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett), who is my Member of Parliament if he has forgotten, that he voted against the closure on Second Reading.

Mr. Harry Barnes: *rose*——

Ms. Short: I give way to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Barnes: Will my hon. Friend confirm that it is not Birmingham city council that decides whether to have a Bill, but the House, and only after a discussion of the representations made to it? Hon. Members discuss the ins and outs and they make their decision.

Ms. Short: My hon. Friend is right. If it was in the power of Birmingham city council to run a road race, it could do so and it would be accountable to its voters. We have the power to vote for or against the Bill, and therefore we have a duty to do our best by the people of Birmingham. We must protect their interests to ensure that some of the truth is told, as opposed to the hype and the fibs about the profitability deriving from the Bill. I consider that it is my duty to use my platform in the Chamber to put the truth on record because so many misleading statements have been made.

Mr. Corbett *rose*——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose*——

Ms. Short: I give way to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Corbett: Let me make it clear that, although I support the Bill, I voted against the closure because I thought that it had been inadequately discussed. I am all in favour of adequate discussion.

Ms. Short: As I recollect, my hon. Friend thought it was important that I should have the opportunity to speak. Whether I spoke was not important: what was important was that I was the only person who had been in touch with people living on the circuit of that race. They feel passionately about the Bill, but there was no chance to put

[Ms. Short]

their views on record. My hon. Friend voted against the closure, because he agreed that their views should be known.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I am always fascinated to hear Socialists talking about Socialists. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) has spelt out the majority held by the Labour party on Birmingham city council. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) has used such words as "untruths" and "lies" and has said, "If only the truth could be told." Does she think that the Labour leadership of our great city has told untruths? We have said so more than once, but she has always said that we were wrong. Why should she be believed on this one issue?

Ms. Short: The hon. Gentleman must be aware that the Bill has cross-party support as well as cross-party opposition in Birmingham——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: No thanks to you.

Ms. Short: Perhaps there is no opposition to it on the Conservative Benches. We all know how craven they are in the face of their Chief Whip. The hon. Gentleman must be aware that Conservative councillors from Selly Oak voted against the Bill at the area sub-committee meeting shortly before the debate in April——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: They are Lefties like you.

Ms. Short: I think that the hon. Member for Selly Oak has enjoyed himself too much earlier today——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I have not had a chance.

Ms. Short: The hon. Gentleman is not listening as seriously as he might to what I am saying. The Bill is not about Conservative or Labour support—it has cross-party support. From reading press reports, however, it seems to me that the support of senior Conservative councillors in Birmingham for the Bill and the race is eroding. They are making more and more qualified statements about how worried they are about money and whether the race should go on as it is because they recognise that it is becoming increasingly unpopular. We must deal with what is best for the people of Birmingham, rather than cheap points misleading people about where the support comes from. There is support and opposition from both Labour and Conservative councillors.

Dame Jill Knight (Birmingham, Edgbaston): It was a pity that the hon. Lady was not called in the former debate, and I am glad that you called her this evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It is important that, when we discuss these matters with the eyes of our city upon us, we are absolutely accurate in what we say. I have received a number of letters from my constituents who are also on the route. I have been impressed with the way that every complaint that I have received, whether it concerns access, noise or drunkenness on the day of the race, has been properly investigated and all my constituents have been seen. If there were to be the erosion of support about which the hon. Lady speaks, we would all have received letters. I have had no such letters suggesting any erosion of support.

Ms. Short: I have no wish to be impolite to the hon. Lady, but I have had meetings with the residents associations which have come together over the Bill. They have complained about the number of requests they have made to meet the hon. Lady and her refusal to meet them.

Dame Jill Knight: That is not true.

Ms. Short: That has been put to me by a significant number of people from various residents associations.

My first objection to the Bill going any further concerns the way that it has been handled. Before it went into Committee, the people of Ladywood and those living around the circuit did not have a chance to have their views put before the House. Procedurally, that was wrong. For that reason alone, we should start again and do things properly.

Secondly, there has been improper pressure from the Conservative Chief Whip to get the Bill through. That is an improper interference in the fair-minded consideration of the Bill and the interests of the people of Birmingham. For those two procedural reasons it is my strong view that the Bill should not be carried over and that we should, if necessary, and if it is not possible to persuade the city council to think again, start properly in the next Session and consider the Bill in a better way with less party political interference for reasons which might be improper.

The people of Ladywood feel strongly about the Bill, and I shall attempt to put some of their views on record. That is difficult, as I have with me a large number of letters —just some of the many I have received. My judgment is that about 50 per cent. are opposed to the whole road race. The majority of people say that it could be better run and that they are worried about money. They do not say that the two-day road race should be abolished. However, there is no doubt that the overwhelming opinion of people living near the circuit is that the Bill dealing with the four-day road race should not be passed.

I will not read out all the letters, as that would detain the House for too long, but I shall read a letter from a headmaster at a local school. I will not name him.

Mr. Denis Howell: Why not?

Ms. Short: I do not know whether to name him or not. I am afraid that a matter of privilege has been put before the House because of the treatment by the city council of one individual who was brave enough to try to put information before the House about the operation of the Bill. The overwhelming and disproportionate support for the Bill among senior figures in the city council means that they might use their powers to damage the interests of individuals who dare to tell the truth about the Bill.

The headmaster wrote to me saying that he wanted to enlist my support against any extension of the road race. He said:

"This disruption of our school environment is without precedent in the United Kingdom. It would never get any sort of acceptance in Edgbaston, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield or around the streets of Dulwich. It is a grotesque example of how people who lack political clout are treated with contempt and are walked over for the sake of commercial interest and/or vainglory. It has very little to do with genuine civic pride. For a city whose educational provision is £10 per pupil below the national average and also whose teacher-pupil ratios are amongst the worst in England, there are clearly more important ways for the city to raise its self-esteem.

On behalf of the parents and Governors of this school, I urge you to speak most strongly against the Bill coming soon before Parliament."

That was in April, and I attempted to do as he asked.

The letter went on to say that that school and others in the area are currently

"fighting for our survival as inner-city secondary schools. The main problem causing the demise of falling rolls is the perception parents have of this inner-city environment ie, it is one to be moved away from as soon as possible. Is it any wonder that so many parents believe they must seek a 'better' social-educational environment for their 11-plus age children.".

Mr. Roger King *rose*——

Ms. Short: Let me finish the letter.

It goes on:

"The superprix and/or its extension only reinforces the perception that local parents have of this area—it is one on which they are treated with contempt—even that which they have is taken away ie, the right to some peace and quiet and not to be exploited by others.".

Mr. King: The hon. Lady explained in that letter exactly what the motor race is all about. She says that people cannot wait to leave the rundown inner city, because nothing happens. The city is trying to develop something that is exciting for the inner city, which involves the local community and which identifies the area as one having attractions. Some of the commitments—the repair of underpasses, the landscaping of areas and the improvement of the housing stock in the environment of the motor race circuit—are exactly the things about which the headmaster is complaining. The city is doing those things thanks to the Birmingham City Council (No. 2) Bill.

Ms. Short: The hon. Gentleman is welcome to have the race in Northfield. He can say as much as he likes about the purposes behind the Bill, but I know better and meet more frequently the people who live there. They do not see it as he does. The hon. Gentleman can make his own speech, but I can tell him, the House and the Government that, if there is any chance of moving the road race to Northfield, the people of Ladywood will vote for it overwhelmingly. *[Interruption.]* Does my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath wish to intervene?

Mr. Denis Howell: Yes, since I have been invited. Every public opinion poll taken in the vicinity of the road race has produced a majority in favour of it.

Ms. Short: If my right hon. Friend checked more carefully, he would see that the city council claims that only just half those living in the locality support the extension to four days. If one looks at the way the question was asked, one will see it was asked misleadingly. Anyone who knows anything about opinion polling—I presume everyone in the House takes some interest in it—will know that, if a question is asked in a distorted way, one can receive different answers.

Mr. Bevan: As the hon. Lady claims that the question was posed in such a way as to show bias, can she tell us what the question said?

Ms. Short: Unfortunately, I do not have—*[Laughter.]* I have an enormous pile of papers and if the hon. Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) waited for the answer, he might be able to laugh. Surely it is only polite to wait. I have a stack of papers in the Library including that particular set of questions and answers, which I looked at half an hour ago. However, I cannot, without that piece of paper, tell the hon. Gentleman the exact words of the question. When I looked at them, I thought again what I had thought when I first looked at them, which was that the question was inviting a certain answer. The question was something like: given that this road race is so good for Birmingham, do you not agree that it should be extended to three days? It is not quite that, but that sort of question.

I am anxious to proceed——

Mr. Harry Barnes: I have one of the questions here. A number of different questionnaires were available and I have an example of one question which states:

"If Birmingham were to be offered a different sort of event, a Grand Prix, we should like the flexibility to move the dates if necessary, i.e. not on a bank holiday. Would you object to a change in the date?"

There were 33 per cent. in support of the suggestion and 67 per cent. against.

Ms. Short: My hon. Friend is right: that was one of the questions.

I do not have time to read all the letters in the pile in front of me, but they include representations from Volvo—a major employer and a major firm on the circuit of the race—which writes about how deeply disruptive the race is to its business and states that it does not want it extended. A local vicar from Balsall Heath church centre wrote asking that we should oppose the four-day event. The church lies in the constituency of my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), who also opposed the Bill on Second Reading. His constituent and my constituents are disrupted by the race.

The letter states:

"Beside the general disruption for weeks before and after the race, as this residential area is turned into a motor-racing track, the worst experience for the residents is the exceedingly high level of noise. For many the two day event is only just bearable: four days will be intolerable. Some people in the area work nights, even over the Bank Holiday period, and need to sleep in the day. Many are elderly and infirm. There are mothers with babies who cannot begin to understand what all the noise is about. There are many people on tranquillisers. People have complained to me about suffering from headaches for weeks afterwards because of the noise. I am sure a four-day event will considerably increase discomfort and ill-health in the area. Most of the people of this area are poor. They cannot afford to go away on holiday to avoid the noise and disruption in the life of their neighbourhood. They need the protection of their elected representatives. I urge you, with other Birmingham MPs"—

the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) may wish to hear this—

"to oppose any Parliamentary Bill to extend the times allowed for the Birmingham super-prix."

I have received other letters from Express Polythene, Frank Starkey Ltd., an old-age pensioner who cannot sleep at night, Smith Francis Tools Ltd., Alfred J. Parker Ltd., several other old-age pensioners, another firm, Aston and Taylor (News) Ltd., Birmingham Fellowship of Handicapped and many other employers. I have also heard from the Federation of Fruit and Potato Trades Ltd. because the race disrupts access to the markets in Birmingham. All the letters claim that these people can just about cope with two days, although the disruption is terrible, but four days would be unbearable for us as human beings and for our businesses.

Mr. Rooker: I know that we are time-limited, and I am keen to listen to other hon. Members, and even participate myself. However, I hope that my hon. Friend will not gloss over the employers which she has just mentioned. There is

[Mr. Rooker]

obviously a difference of balance between those employers who provide income to the city and support the city and want the race, and those who do not want it. There is evidence of enormous numbers of traditional employers, and consequently employees, who are badly affected by the Bill. On the plus side, all we are given is a couple of hotels, a few pubs and a night club. That is not even as straightforward as one might suppose, according to the representations which I have received. Therefore, I hope that my hon. Friend will not gloss over this matter, because she possesses something which no other hon. Member has: experience as the constituency Member of Parliament who represents employers on and inside the circuit whose businesses are badly affected.

Ms. Short: There is no doubt that many major businesses and employers are affected. Volvo on Bristol road, which employs about 100 people and has a massive turnover, is totally opposed. Some misleading propaganda has been put out by the press department of the city council. There is absolutely no doubt that major employers think that it is disruptive for the city and businesses. Two days is disruptive, four days is massively worse.

I have mentioned two reasons why this motion should not be carried: the way in which the Bill has been wrongly handled in procedural terms, and the overwhelming and passionate feeling of my constituents, local residents and businesses that four days is intolerable. The third reason for my opposition to the Bill is a matter touched on by my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill on Second Reading. It relates to the deeply dishonourable behaviour of the city council in relation to the Bill which has already been passed.

When the Bill to grant the two-day road race was first proposed, I faced a dilemma. I think that racing should be done on purpose-built tracks. I am not against racing, but it is dangerous, disruptive and noisy. People who want it should go to purpose-built tracks to enjoy road racing because that makes it safer and less disruptive for other people. In my original speech, as my hon. Friends may remember, I said that I faced a dilemma because although I was against the Bill I did not feel that I had the right to overturn the view of Birmingham city council which put the proposal before the House.

When Birmingham city council put it before us, it gave us lots of documents suggesting that the race would make masses of money for the people of Birmingham and create lots of jobs. I have one of the road race fact packs which we were given. It states:

"The race will make money for the City Council, so the ratepayer will not lose out. We will not be taking decisions on whether to repair leaking roofs or support the road race. The road race will bring more cash into the authority's kitty."

I was deeply sceptical about whether the road race would make money. I was deeply worried that, instead, money which the ratepayers had paid and which was desperately needed to fix up some of the tower blocks and maisonettes which surround the circuit and are riddled with black mould would be used for the road race.

A proper insulation programme could massively improve the quality of life for the people who live in those homes. I feared that money would be used for the road race which could be spent on giving decent housing to those families. As hon. Members probably know, black mould is not just uncomfortable and smelly, but seriously damages children's lungs. A large number of children in my constituency who live in those black mould infested flats are in and out of hospital with serious asthma and bronchitis problems.

Mr. Bevan: How on earth can the hon. Lady say that the HIP allowance for housing and the specific allowances for housing within the block grant are adversely affected by the finances of the motor race?

Ms. Short: Obviously, the hon. Gentleman was not listening. I do not know what goes on in this Chamber. I have read out some of the propaganda which the city council issued for the first road race in which it gives an assurance that it will not have to choose between the road race and leaking roofs because the race will bring money into the city. [An hon. Member: "It does."]. The hon. Gentleman seems not to be listening. The city council said that the race would be profitable and money would not have to be spent on it which would otherwise be used for repairing houses.

I doubted that the race would make money, but I thought that the best thing we could do would be to amend the Bill to hold the city council to its promise. It was promising that it would not cost the ratepayers anything and that a choice would not have to be made between the quality of other public services and the road roace. Therefore, my hon. Friends the Members for Perry Barr and Hodge Hill and I moved an amendment suggesting the following framework: that the power to run the road race should cease if it could not cover its costs in five years.

We did not state that it would have to meet its cost in the first year because we understand that it might have to build up its finances, and might take a little time to do so.

Mr. Terry Davis: My hon. Friend understates the case. We were told that the race would make a profit in three years. We suggested that the city council should be allowed five years so that there would be no possibility of it just missing the target in the third year. We were generous enough to give it an extra two years. Now we feel that we have been taken for a ride.

Ms. Short: My hon. Friend is right. We gave more than was asked. We thought that things could go wrong, it could rain—it certainly rained horrendously in the first year. We did not ask for the race to make a profit, but to break even in five years. We negotiated with the leader of the city council and it was agreed that this was a useful and helpful suggestion for the people of Birmingham and would be incorporated in the Bill. Sir Reginald Eyre, the then Member for Hall Green, sponsored the Bill on behalf of the city council. He said that our amendment proposal was wholly acceptable and that the city council would not want to run the race if it cost the ratepayers money. We were pleased and thought that, with this reasonable compromise, we had protected the interests of the people of Birmingham, and the leadership of the city council was happy with our amendment. Our proposal meant that the race could not cost money which should be spent on children's books, leaking roofs, black mould in flats, and so on.

The road race did less well than expected, and the accounts looked bad. The council was worried that the

power to run the race would lapse because it could not cover its costs, so it took legal advice from Price Waterhouse and went back more than once on that advice.

I have questioned the legality of all this with Price Waterhouse, and the company informs me that legal advice was taken on several occasions before what follows was done. It was decided that the running of the road race was worth £500,000 a year in advertising to the city of Birmingham, in terms of tourism promotion. It was further decided that that amount could be attributed to the value of the race in the accounts, thus converting a loss-making race into one that covered its costs.

This might be legal, but it is dishonourable, representing as it did a breach of the agreement that we had reached and of the words of Sir Reginald Eyre, who had said that the city council did not want to run the race if it cost the ratepayers money.

Mr. Denis Howell: Does my hon. Friend recognise that the form of accountancy in which the city is called upon by auditors, Price Waterhouse, to put in the accounts the amount by which the city is estimated to have benefited was imposed on the city and the Bill by my hon. Friends, who were thus hoist with their own petard? As a result, the council had to call in outside experts, specialists in international propaganda, who told it that the value of the race to Birmingham was £600,000. Price Waterhouse then had to insist that the city paid the £600,000 into the account to cover the requirement imposed by my hon. Friend.

May I further tell my hon. Friend——

Ms. Short: No—my right Friend is making a speech instead of an intervention.

Mr. Howell: It is important that she gets the facts right.

The race made an operational loss of £173,000 in 1986, an operational profit of £76,500 in 1987, and last year, 1988, an operational profit of £536,000—more than half a million pounds. That must be good business for Birmingham.

Ms. Short: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for giving way to me.

The figures that my right hon. Friend quoted take into account the notional value of £600,000 for promoting Birmingham. That is a false profit, derived from promoting what is, in the eyes of the world, a potty little road race in Birmingham, at the expense of my constituents—and still the race cannot cover its costs.

My right hon. Friend's first point was also 100 per cent. wrong. We put it to the city council that the road race should be required to recover its costs, and that if it could not, the power to run it would lapse after five years. The council went away to its legal advisers and asked our co-operation in framing the amendment in the way that the council wanted.

We know that the accounting procedures for the road race are different from normal local authority accounting, but let us not allow that technical point to get in the way of what I consider the city council's deeply dishonourable behaviour in misleading the people of Birmingham. The council promised that the power to run the road race would cease if it cost the ratepayers money; it was then found that the race could not cover its costs; legal advice was taken and a way around the provision was found.

It is dishonourable to pretend that the race is worth £500,000 in promotion, but that was done to square the books and return the legal power to run the race. That still makes me angry when I think about it, and most people in Birmingham are unaware of how badly they have been misled by the sort of figures given my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath——

Mr. Terry Davis: Does my hon. Friend remember that the subsidy from the rates was charged to a promotion of tourism account that was already in deficit, so that the true effect of what the council did was to reclassify a loss?

Ms. Short: My hon. Friend is an expert in these matters. An attempt was made to mislead people about the road race covering its costs—it cannot. If a race that causes all this disruption cannot cover its costs, it is a waste of time——

Mr. Roger King: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Ms. Short: I did not think that the hon. Gentleman believed in public services. I do; priorities are caring for people and spending money on those who are in great need. The hon. Gentleman believes in subsidising an unprofitable road race out of the rates—and out of what is to be the poll tax—for the pleasure of his racing friends. They should pay for their own pleasures.

Mr. King: Has public money been taken out of the housing, education or social services budgets in the city accounts to subsidise this race? I do not think that the hon. Lady can find a penny piece that has been.

More importantly, the accusation that the hon. Lady has just levelled at the city is astounding. She has called city officers dishonest—and, by implication, the city leader and the leader of the council——

Mr. Terry Davis: She has not.

Mr. King: She has. It is evident to me that the word "misleading" could be interpreted as dishonest—a serious charge to level at our city's officers and leaders.

Ms. Short: I have heard that men of a certain age acquire hearing problems. Three or four instances of that seem to be present this evening. Whenever I say something, an hon. Gentleman gets up and appears not to have heard it. I said that I believed that getting around the provisions of the Act in which it was agreed that the race should break even or be discontinued after five years was deeply dishonourable. That is what I said and that is what I meant.

Mr. King: That is worse.

Ms. Short: At school we told each other to wash out our ears if we could not hear properly. The word that I meant and used was "dishonourable".

I am upset and surprised that the city council of Birmingham, with the agreement of all parties and of its senior officers, is willing to behave so dishonourably——

Mr. Denis Howell: Say that outside.

Ms. Short: I have said it outside, and I have corresponded with those who objected to my doing so. We have all explained to each other why I used the term——

Mr. Harry Barnes: My hon. Friend was being charitable; would she term this activity creative accounting?

Ms. Short: It would be charitable to call it that. It is a legal breach of an agreement. The council found a technical and legal way to break its word and the spirit of an amendment to a Bill that was passed in this House.

Mr. Rooker: In good faith.

Ms. Short: Yes, and when we reached the agreement, there was good faith on both sides.

Other parts of the legislation and other agreements have also been breached. We felt strongly that, if the people of Birmingham were to subsidise the race even for five years, they should have better access to it than others. We thought it fair and right that the people of Birmingham should have access to cheaper tickets than people from other parts of the country. That was accepted and it was on the face of the Bill, but it has been breached and ignored.

I do not know why the House bothers to pass legislation for Birmingham, because Birmingham does not seem to take any notice. The council looked at our suggestion about tickets and thought that it was inconvenient and difficult to provide them for the people of Birmingham, so instead they provided cheaper tickets for those who bought them in advance of the race, and that is a breach of the law. If some people who did not get cheap tickets were richer, they would probably take legal action on the matter. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) spoke about cigarette advertising. I know that undertakings were given. Were they incorporated in the Bill?

Mr. Terry Davis: I have looked into the matter and I think that the verbal undertakings have been kept to the letter. Tobacco is advertised on a car that takes part in the race, but I would not accuse the city council of having broken that undertaking. The undertaking was worded in such a way that the council has kept it.

Ms. Short: That is interesting. It is a matter that interests my hon. Friend rather than me, but I thought that there was an agreement that there would be no promotion of South African people or of cigarettes. I went to the road race last time. I did not go to the stands, nor did I partake of the hospitality. I visited the houses and gardens of some of my constituents. There is an unbearable noise when the cars pass and I saw a car advertising, I think, Marlboro cigarettes. I seem to remember an undertaking about not advertising cigarettes. When we met senior figures in the council in the early stages of the Bill, the undertaking that cigarettes would not be advertised was repeated.

Mr. Davis: My hon. Friend's recollection is correct. I sought undertakings from the city council on two matters: that there should not be sponsorship by any company well known as being involved in South Africa, and that the race should not advertise tobacco and particularly cigarettes. I have checked the file and the letter that I subsequently received from the city council. I think that the city council has honoured that undertaking. I believe in approaching the Bill and the whole question of the road race objectively. We should not accuse anyone of bad faith in respect of those two undertakings.

Ms. Short: I am pleased to hear that, because it restores my faith a little. I have never taken a major interest in that point, but I was shocked when I saw the Marlboro car go rushing by. The legislation lays down strict times about when the barriers can be erected and taken down. Those rules are unquestionably breached and anyone who lives in any of the streets will say they are erected earlier and taken down later, sometimes in the middle of the night when there is supposed to be no noise.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: That is shocking.

Ms. Short: I am glad to hear that the hon. Member for Selly Oak is shocked. This year, when I went to the road race, tenant after tenant in houses next to the circuit complained about the unbearable noise. It is an incredible noise, which hurts one's ears. I met the leader of the city council, and he said, "What do you think?" I said that I did not like it very much. He said "It is terribly noisy—unbearable isn't it?" He said that as he left the circuit after the major race of the day. The noise is uncomfortable, especially for elderly people and children. If readings were taken of the noise levels I am sure that they would be found to be above the danger to health level.

I see that the council has undertaken to monitor future noise levels. I understand that the council monitored the levels this year but will not publish the results. Last year or in previous years it handed out free ear plugs.

Mr. Corbett: It did that this year.

Ms. Short: Not to everybody. I was there, and as I walked up and down people said to me, "We got free ear plugs last year but we have not all got them this year." I know that the people in the hospitality tent gave them out. As I was leaving, the leader of the city council gave me his, and I still have them on my desk in Birmingham. However, they were not given to all the people who live in the area and who need them more than the visitors, because they are in the area all the time.

Leaving aside the matter of tobacco—I accept the correction of my hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill on that—there are other serious breaches of the agreement. The big one is the breach of the undertaking to break even in five years or stop. There are also breaches about the times of erecting the barriers and cheaper tickets for the people of Birmingham, an agreement that was on the face of the Bill and which has been breached.

The hon. Member for Northfield recited a list of undertakings about what the city council will do. Second time around, I am afraid that I do not believe that. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman gave the undertakings in good faith. However, I am sure that, when Sir Reginald Eyre said that it would not be the wish of any hon. Member or of anyone on the city council to run the race if it cost the ratepayers money, he did so with an absolute commitment. However, we have seen breaches of the undertakings.

Undertakings are welcome as far as they go, but they are not necessarily honoured. They are only undertakings, and were not even on the face of the Bill. Leaving aside the continuing argument about money, the undertaking about cheap tickets for the people of Birmingham has been ignored. It was also said that religious worship would be respected. People in the churches on the circuit cannot hear themselves praying when a race is on, and to say that they will be able to continue with religious worship is a

joke. They will not, because it will be impossible. I am afraid that I do not believe the undertakings given by the hon. Member for Northfield.

There is another matter relating to accounts. People in Ladywood are sceptical about what is included and what is excluded in the accounts. Some extraordinary things are going on. This is a neglected area with terrible problems of black mould in the houses. People come along just before the race and paint the houses fronting the circuit. Houses round the corner do not get painted. Curtains are put up in empty flats so that, when television cameras pan the area, viewers will not see empty windows.

People who live in the area and whose real needs and those of their children and local schools are neglected get very angry and cynical about such behaviour. I do not believe for one minute that the accounts reflect the real cost of the race, because we know that they take account only of staff who are almost wholly employed in organising the race. All the people who clean up the area, put out the flowers, do the painting and so on are not included in the accounts.

The people who live there are extremely cynical. I have had many letters and complaints, some of which I have sent on. People say, "Just because I live off the circuit, my house has not been painted. Houses round the corner that are on the circuit have been painted twice, but mine has not been touched because the television camera will not pan across it." Those that are painted are painted only in the front and not at the back.

One of the undertakings given today was that double glazing would be fitted to houses near the circuit. Imagine the cost of that.

Mr. Denis Howell: Does my hon. Friend object to that?

Ms. Short: If people are to be subjected to horrendous noise, they should have double glazing, but it would be much better to put the race on a purpose-built circuit so that they are not subjected to such noise.

Mr. Terry Davis: I have some experience of this, and I know that secondary glazing should be provided, not double glazing. Secondary glazing to cut down noise is well known in my constituency because of the nuisance from Birmingham airport. The problem with secondary glazing is that it is effective only if one keeps the windows closed. This race takes place on August bank holiday —the very time when people like to have their windows open.

Ms. Short: I take my hon. Friend's point, and I know that his constituency suffers because of the noise from the airport. However, the airport is a different problem. Races should be put on a track, so that the noise does not affect people so much. Instead of the money being spent on double glazing, it should be used to tackle the black mould. I feel strongly about that, because it is a serious problem that can be dealt with, and the money has not been found to do so.

The Bill should not be carried over, because of the sheer intolerable disruption that it causes to people's lives. When the race was on this year, I visited a number of my constituents whose houses are on the circuit and I heard the noise, which is unbearable. It is fine if one goes to a road race because one chooses to go, is excited to go and is happy to subject one's ears to this unbearable noise. However, if one lives on the circuit, one is subjected to it whether or not one wants to be. When people complain, they are told to go away, but when they go away, their houses are broken into and their gardens are used as urinals. People feel that they need to stay in their houses to look after them when crowds are coming to the area.

There is also enormous disruption to traffic in the period leading up to the race, caused by the erection of barriers. I imagine that the hon. Members for Northfield and for Selly Oak know about that. Taxi drivers and others complain about it.

Furthermore, once the barriers are up, buses are diverted. This is a poorer area with relatively low car ownership and people who have to use buses to go into town to do their shopping cannot get on them. They object to that.

I do not know whether hon. Members know, but when the armco kerb is erected, mothers with children and pensioners cannot get out of their houses properly, so little ramps are built to help such people. Unfortunately, a number of elderly people fell off the ramp over the armco kerb so that they could get out of their houses to do their shopping. This is all for a two-day race.

I have a letter here from one of my constituents, Mr. O'Donnell, of 21, Hodnet grove, who sent for a doctor because he was ill. The doctor came at 11.30 am, was not allowed in, went away and did not come back till 5 pm, although the organisers said that they would provide access. Happily, although he was in pain, my constituent did not suffer from a worse illness because of this lack of treatment.

Church services are enormously disrupted, and that is greatly objected to.

I made it clear at the beginning of my speech, and I make it clear again, that the city of Birmingham already has legal powers to run a two-day road race. It should concentrate on running it efficiently, covering costs and not disrupting the lives of local people. A four-day race will be unbearable, because of the disruption and costs. Contradictory things are said about this four-day race. Sometimes we are told that it will become a grand prix, which will mean that there will be four days of racing, which will be unbearable for local people. Sometimes, we are told that it will be only a three-day race, but in that case why does the Bill take powers for four days?

The Bill has been wrongly handled. It would be better to start again. It is intolerable to suggest that powers should be granted for a four-day race with no constraint on expenditure. For that reason alone, it would be better to lose the Bill and start again next Session. It is in the interests of the people of Birmingham that this road race ceases. I think that if hon. Members met and knew my constituents, they would agree with me, and would not vote for a four-day race. It has been ridiculously hyped up. Screaming noisy cars should not go round where people live.

When I saw the race, I was interviewed by a man, whose name I have forgotten, who produces a motor racing programme. He said that it was a rotten track and that at hardly any point could one see what was going on. It may be exciting to have a race where people live, but it is a bad track. It is not a good shape for road racing. It is rubbish on every level. I appeal to the House not to carry the Bill over to the next Session.

[Ms. Short]

9.4 pm

The Minister for Roads and Traffic (Mr. Robert Atkins): I shall intervene only briefly—the motion is strictly procedural—to advise the House of the Government's view. My hon. Friends may rest assured that I am not the Government Chief Whip. They need have no fear that my words will in any sense cause them to worry.

The House knows that traditionally the Government stand neutral on private Bills, and this Bill is no exception to that rule. It was made clear to the House when my hon. Friend the Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley), who was then the Minister responsible, intervened on Second Reading that the issues raised by the Bill are essentially of local concern. Accordingly, there is no reason for the Government to intervene. It would be consistent with that approach for the Government to support the carry-over motion.

9.5 pm

Mr. David Gilroy Bevan (Birmingham, Yardley): I have been referred to in the debate, it having been said that on a previous occasion my speech was short. I acknowledge that. I spoke for only a short time because I wished to allow another two Labour Members to contribute to the debate. I regret that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) did not speak on that occasion, but she certainly had her fill this evening. We listened to 55 minutes of innuendo, accusations and distortions of quotations. That did little honour to Birmingham, to the level of the debate and to the great majority of the people of Birmingham, who want the debate and want the car race. That being so, they want the carry-over motion to be agreed to.

There has been talk in the Chamber of 6:1 being in favour of the Bill and the car race—*[Interruption.]* I am not surprised that the hon. Member for Ladywood is leaving the Chamber after the accusations that she made. In Birmingham, however, there was a clear majority in favour of the Bill. There was no bias in the question that was put to the people of Birmingham—that was made clear when it was read out to us—and there has been no dishonour.

Birmingham and the midlands are benefiting from tourism by about £1,000 million a year, and it is imperative that the city is associated with the motor car. The motor car is one of its earliest manufactures and it is something for which the city is historically well known. The car race offers a showroom window to the world.

The right hon. Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) and my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) were, like me, members of Birmingham city council for a long time before coming to this place. My hon. Friend the Member for Selly Oak and I were members of the council for far longer than we have been members of the House. I served on the council for 21 years and I know that my hon. Friend served on it for longer than that. The right hon. Member for Small Heath served between 1946 and 1954.

Mr. Denis Howell: No, 1956.

Mr. Bevan: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for correcting me. I should like to be accurate in every respect during my speech, unlike some of those who have spoken before me.

The right hon. Member for Small Heath knows, as we all do—he, my hon. Friend the Member for Selly Oak and I are the only three people present who served on the city council—that Birmingham has wanted the Bill for a long time. My hon. Friend the Member for Selly Oak and I voted for such a measure as long ago as 1973 when the issue first arose. I am pleased to say that the Bill is now unstoppable unless some Opposition Members—a small minority—are successful in their determination to block the measure by introducing every disruptive practice that they can.

The prime motive behind the Bill is safety, which is of paramount importance in motor racing. The international governing body, FISA, is responsible for the safety of drivers and tracks. Its rules become stricter year by year. We must applaud FISA and ensure that its rules are abided by. One of the greatest racing drivers in history has recently learnt that safety rules must be abided by, probably at the cost of losing a world championship. Therefore, I remind the House that the principal purpose of the Bill is to improve safety in the pits and on the track. Without the legislation, the international licence of the Birmingham circuit is in jeopardy. A vote against the Bill is a vote not only against the promoters' ambitious plans to extend the event, but against the race itself.

In my view, the hon. Member for Ladywood committed political suicide when she announced her real intention in the last minutes of her speech. Unlike that of most other people, her real intention is to stop the Bill and to delay or jeopardise the future of the race. Other cities, in Britain and abroad, would be very anxious to take up the challenge if Birmingham were to lose it. The longer the race is established, the safer it is and the safer Birmingham's lead in world terms.

One of my portfolios on the Back Benches is tourism, so I know that the figures are right. Hoteliers are reporting greater use of hotels and the value to tourism of activities such as motor racing is accelerating in Birmingham. It means more jobs in the inner city, in Ladywood, in Sparkbrook, in parts of Hodge Hill and certainly in parts of Yardley. It would be madness to object to those economic gains.

Mr. Rooker: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Bevan: The debate has been characterised by continual interventions and I should be obliged if the hon. Gentleman would allow me to make my case as quickly as I can so that he can question my speech in the context of his own.

The race has been one of the contributory factors to £1·5 billion investment in the city and an endorsement of the enterprise for which Birmingham is so famous. That is an all-party endorsement because Birmingham is not divided on this matter. The only divisions are the few that have been so vocally expressed tonight. All the great things that exist in Birmingham—the national exhibition centre, the convention centre which is almost finished and the Birmingham international airport and station—were all carried through on an all-party basis, as is our tradition.

I have been privileged and honoured to be part of that process. To suggest, under the protection of this Chamber, that our officials have behaved dishonourably is an absolute iniquity. On behalf of those officials I must stress that they have committed no malfeasance whatsoever and the case has been put fairly and honourably, as it deserves. Tonight an attempt has been made to perpetrate a moral defeat by using procedural means to defeat a Bill which has almost, the wholehearted support of those on the council, in the city and in the country.

I am certain that hon. Members who object to the Bill are sincere, but why do they always object to measures that, given time, will not only be profitable for the city's coffers and underwrite matters of greater social importance but will give people pleasure? I cannot and will not understand that attitude.

We want to support industry, and what better way of showing that than by supporting the industry that has been the heart of the midlands—the car industry? The race does not deprive Birmingham of money, but it adds to the spectrum of the city and to the quality of leisure in it. It is of much value to the Rover Group and other manufacturers and all the component manufacturers who employ Brummies.

Although the race may occasionally be noisy, and although occasionally it might be the cause of verbal abrasiveness in the House or outside, it is welcome. Birmingham is a warm and welcoming and exciting place, and once experienced it is not easily left or forgotten. I invite my right hon. and hon. Friends to agree to the carry-over motion and to continue to give the city its car birthright.

9.16 pm

Mr. Denis Howell (Birmingham, Small Heath): Although I feel strongly about the Bill, about which I have spoken previously, you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be glad to hear that I shall attempt to put my succinct points succinctly.

Some important points must be made. I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) has left the Chamber—I am sure for good reasons—but I am sure that she will not object to my replying to some of the points that she made. My hon. Friend let the cat out of the bag in the last two minutes of her speech. For 55 minutes, she urged us not to pass the carry-over motion but to introduce a new Bill and to reconsider financial and other matters. Having urged that on us, she said that we should kill the road race. It was quite clear to hon. Members that whatever the city council did she would not support a Bill for a road race in any circumstances. Therefore, her plea——

Mr. Rooker: My hon. Friend said, in her constituency.

Mr. Howell: I accept that amendment. Her plea to introduce a new Bill for the race, which is located in her constituency, would therefore never receive her support.

I need not remind you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are debating the carry-over motion. We should not be debating the merits of the road race——

Mr. Rooker: We are not.

Mr. Howell: My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) says that we are not. In that case, I must have misunderstood the lengthy speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Ladywood.

The Bill has properly gone through its parliamentary procedures, but hon. Members voting against the carry-over motion are voting not to continue parliamentary discussion of the Bill.

Mr. Rooker: In this Session.

Mr. Howell: In this next Session. The carry-over motion is to allow us to continue discussion in the next Session. Some of my hon. Friends do not want to debate the merits of the Bill in the next Session, which is why they oppose the carry-over motion. I do not approve of that extraordinary parliamentary procedure. I have strong views about the private Bill procedure, which has got out of hand, but they are probably not so strong as yours, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You have my sympathy in dealing with that dilemma. When the public are required to bring a private Bill before the House to get parliamentary authority for their actions, they are entitled to have the procedures on the Bill followed in the ways laid down by Parliament. My hon. Friends are objecting to that.

There is no doubt that many Birmingham citizens support the Bill. Even those living close to the race supported it in a poll. My hon. Friend the Member for Ladywood conceded that just over 50 per cent. voted for it. That is a majority among the people most likely to be affected. The Bill certainly has the support of a majority of the members of the city council, and I am glad to say that it has the support of at least eight of the 12 Birmingham Members of Parliament. That should not be lightly forgotten.

I should like to deal with a financial point. I gave some figures in an intervention, so I shall not go over them again. In 1988, the last year for which we have published accounts for the race, there was an operational profit of about £582,000—a tremendous profit. Before my hon. Friend the Member for Perry Bar intervenes, may I say that I agree that that includes the £600,000. My hon. Friend has a big responsibility for that sum, to which he will not admit. After taking account of that £600,000, the deficit this year was about £17,000 overall. The cost to the ratepayer this year was about £17,000.

Mr. Rooker: It was £600,000.

Mr. Howell: It was not £600,000, but £17,000.

Mr. Rooker: It was £600,000.

Mr. Howell: My hon. Friend does not understand the figures. The operational profit was £582,000. As my hon. Friend said, the cost to the city of promoting the race was £600,000. If my hon. Friend does a little mathematics, he will see that subtracting £582,616 from £600,000 leaves the cost to the ratepayer—£17,384. That was the actual cost.

Mr. Rooker: No, it was £600,000.

Mr. Howell: I am coming to what we got for that. Did the city council get value for that money? I want to comment on the £600,000 about which my hon. Friends feel so strongly. It was imposed on the city council by my

[Mr. Howell]

hon. Friends because of their representations that every penny possible should be put into the accounts in accordance with proper accounting procedures.

Mr. Rooker: Come on.

Mr. Howell: That is what my hon. Friends were asking for. Because of that pressure, it was proposed in an amendment, to which my hon. Friends did not object, that the accounts must be made on the basis of what was technically termed a "true and fair view" basis. That was the form of words imposed on the city council.

Ms. Short: It was drafted by the city council.

Mr. Howell: It was drafted by the city council, but at the insistence of my hon. Friends.

Mr. Terry Davis: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Howell: Of course I will give way, when I have finished my point. I do not want to stop my hon. Friend from making his point. I remember the "true and fair view" basis in the amendment drafted by the city council to meet the pressures put on it by my hon. Friends to have proper accounting.

Mr. Davis: I was closely involved in discussions with Sir Reginald Eyre on the city council's behalf. The discussions took place in the presence of parliamentary agents on behalf of the city council. I was pressing Sir Reginald Eyre, on behalf of my hon. Friends, to accept the inclusion in the Bill of the principle that there would not be any charge to the rates and the proposal that if the race did not make a cumulative profit after five years—the council was actually offering three years—it would be stopped.

The wording of the amendment was provided by Sir Reginald Eyre and I believe that it was drafted for him by parliamentary agents to give effect to his and the city council's assurances. We were simply asking the city council to include in the Bill what it said it wanted to do in any case. It is not correct for my right hon. Friend to accuse me and my hon. Friends of having drafted the amendment or of being in any way responsible for any defective wording in the city council's effort to give legal effect to what it had offered and we had accepted.

Mr. Howell: I am obliged to my hon. Friend. Everything that he says supports my contention. I certainly never said that my hon. Friends drafted the amendment—I said that they pressed for this form of accountancy.

Mr. Terry Davis: My right hon. Friend is wrong. Will he give way?

Mr. Howell: No, I will not give way. I am describing what happened correctly.

Mr. Davis: That is wrong.

Mr. Howell: I do not believe that I am wrong.

Mr. Davis: My right hon. Friend was not there; I was. Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Howell: Sit down. I know that my hon. Friend was there, but I was the recipient of the Bill when it came back here. The wording that I have read out to the House was designed to meet the pressure that the city council thought was being put on it. Perhaps the council was wrong, but it took advice and the amendment was drafted. To the best of my knowledge, no hon. Member objected to that form of accountancy when we discussed the Birmingham City Council Bill.

Mr. Davis: That is wrong.

Mr. Howell: Let me explain. I must say that I do not want the £600,000 to be included. However, the wording having been accepted, Price Waterhouse said that if we had to have true and meaningful accountancy, the accounts must include the value that the city received from advertising itself worldwide as a result of the race. That is the history of the matter.

Mr. Davis: No, it is not.

Mr. Howell: Yes, it is. We must consider next whether we have had good value for the money.

Mr. Davis: My right hon. Friend is wrong.

Mr. Howell: I do not think that I am. I accept my hon. Friend's account of what happened, but my interpretation of what he said happened is that it resulted in the drafting of the amendment.

Mr. Davis: That is wrong.

Mr. Howell: I believe it to be the case.

Mr. Davis: It is wrong.

Mr. Howell: I support the race not only because it is a major sporting event, and I have spent all my life trying to bring major sporting events to Birmingham, but because the most important aim in inner cities——

Mr. Davis: No.

Mr. Howell: I do not know what my hon. Friend is objecting to.

Mr. Davis: I repeat to my right hon. Friend that he is mistaken. I accept that he is misinformed, but the account that I gave—and he has accepted—of the discussion that took place with Sir Reginald Eyre did not suggest any particular form of words for the amendment or for the type of accountancy to take place. That all came from Sir Reginald Eyre, the city council and the parliamentary agents. It is wrong for my right hon. Friend to suggest that we were in any way involved in the drafting.

Mr. Howell: I did not say that.

Mr. Davis: Sir Reginald Eyre gave an assurance to the House that the amendment proposed by the city council met our points. If it is defective, responsibility rests with the city council.

Mr. Howell: That may be so, and it may be the common ground between us, but I must stress that the amendment was drafted by parliamentary agents and lawyers in an attempt to meet the points that were urged on them about the need for proper constructive accountancy. As a result, my hon. Friends have what they did not expect and what I do not want either. Price Waterhouse—the auditors imposed by the Government, not by the city—told us that in that case we must include the value of the race to the city in promotional terms. That amount is estimated by other consultants and experts to be £600,000. That is not disputed.

Have we had value for money? The second reason why I support the race—if my hon. Friends agree that this is the case, they will agree that it is desirable—is that we must bring jobs into Birmingham. All the inner-city constituencies which I and my hon. Friends represent have an unemployment level of about 30 per cent. I hope that hon. Members supporting the Bill will not mind my saying that our unemployment problems in Birmingham will not be solved by the Government, but by us. [HON. MEMBERS: "That is true."] I agree with that, too. It is all part and parcel of the promotion of the city internationally through the olympic campaign, which I had the privilege to lead, the international exhibition centre, for which there was all-party support, the international convention centre, which promises to be an outstanding success, and the international indoor sports arena. I used some influence to have the arena built in Birmingham with great effect, and it is now being built. It will be the only international indoor sports arena in the country. All such projects are vital. With the grand prix road race, they result in £1·5 billion being invested in Birmingham.

Mr. Rooker: Who is arguing against that?

Mr. Howell: My hon. Friend is arguing against a bit of it.

Mr. Rooker: In the few minutes at the end of Second Reading I separated out all the examples that my right hon. Friend has just given. They are all solid capital assets for our city which will be of undoubted benefit to future generations. However, one cannot by any stretch of the imagination equate the road race with such solid capital assets. It is simply a revenue plughole.

Mr. Howell: The accumulation of public relations and the projection of the city combine to produce the result. No one can deny that the grand prix road race is part of the accumulation aimed at presenting the modern face of Birmingham. This year, 100,000 people watched the road race. Birmingham citizens and others voted with their feet by turning up to watch.

Mr. Rooker: That is 1 per cent. of Birmingham's citizens.

Mr. Howell: One hundred thousand people turned up to watch the race and at least 10 million watched it on television. No sports event in the history of this country has been televised by Independent Television, Central Television and the BBC all at once. It is the only time that a weekend sporting event has been televised simultaneously by every channel available.

Ms. Short: I do not know whether my right hon. Friend attended the race this year, but I have been to it in previous years. It was notable that many of the stands were empty. The people who live nearby say that the numbers were undoubtedly down this year, perhaps because it was beautiful weather. Is my right hon. Friend saying that 100,000 tickets were sold?

Mr. Howell: No, I did not say that. I said that 100,000 people turned up.

Ms. Short: Some of them cannot help it.

Mr. Howell: Let me answer the point. There were 88,000 people who paid to watch the race. This year, the city council, in its wisdom, decided to allow people to bring their children free. There were 88,000 adults at the race and 12,000 children accompanied them. My hon. Friend should welcome that because she has been urging that people in Birmingham should be given concessionary tickets.

Mr. Corbett: As research into attendance at the race last year shows, two out of three people who paid to watch the road race were from outside Birmingham. Is that not important because, but for the road race, that money would be unlikely to come to Birmingham?

Mr. Howell: My hon. Friend is quite right. The road race is part of our attempt to promote the city, and I do not know how it could be done better. It cost us about £17,000 in 1988. Where else in the country could one achieve as much for £17,000? The race has been projected to about 30 different countries worldwide; 11 million people watched it in this country and 100,000 people turned up and paid to watch it. That is fantastic——

Ms. Short: Did you go?

Mr. Howell: No, I did not go because I was having a heart attack at the time. If I had heard my hon. Friend's speech before my heart attack I might not have survived, but due to the care of the National Health Service I am in more robust form than before.

Ms. Short: We are all extremely glad that my right hon. Friend survived. He spent some of the time in Dudley Road hospital in my constituency, and I am sure he received superb care there. We are all very pleased to see him looking so well.

Mr. Howell: My survival was due to the co-operation of Dudley Road hospital in Birmingham and the National Heart hospital in London and I am glad to say that all is well.

Mr. Rooker: My right hon. Friend should take it easy.

Mr. Howell: I intend to take it easy, but my hon. Friend must not provoke me. If my surgeons were here, they would be getting upset.

Almost every country in Europe and countries world-wide broadcast the road race, which appeared not only in its own right but on all the news bulletins. It was very good value for Birmingham. That is why we should carry the Bill over.

I do not want to stop my hon. Friends objecting to the Bill. They have every right to do so, and I do not complain about that for one moment. But the time for them to voice their objections will come on Report and Third Reading. If we pass the motion to carry the Bill over, my hon. Friends will have every right to object in those debates. If we do not carry the motion, we shall kill the Bill and prevent ourselves from taking advantage of the merits of the race. That would be unacceptable from the point of view of the House and of the city of Birmingham. I urge the House to support the motion.

9.36 pm

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): This has been an interesting debate in which Conservative Members' views have been almost peripheral to the argument taking place on the Opposition Benches

[Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark]

—which would be a cause for satisfaction were the Bill not so important to the city of Birmingham and its long-term plans.

I have some sympathy with the proper point made by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) that people's lives are regularly interrupted by developments such as this. When I was a young councillor—as will be obvious, that was many years ago—I secured a bus stop that someone very much wanted. In fact, I did so well that the bus stop was outside the person's house. He never ceased to complain because he wanted the bus stop in his road but outside someone else's house. The same can happen with airports. We all know that Birmingham international airport is of huge importance to the city, but we do not want the flight path over our homes.

Mr. Harry Barnes: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: No, I shall not give way. I want to complete my point for the sake of Birmingham people.

Of course we need airports, but they disturb people's lives. The same is true of the national exhibition centre. I was a founder director and signed the contract on behalf of the city. That, too, interrupted many people's lives—as does the convention centre. One can make a good argument against nearly every development on the ground that it will inconvenience someone.

The hon. Member for Ladywood argued that many of her constituents would be put out, and I do not doubt for one moment that that is a proper argument. Cars, like motor bikes, are noisy things. But we must look further than that. As my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) pointed out, I served on Birmingham city council for 23 years with many splendid Socialist as well as Conservative councillors. We spoke for Birmingham. Labour Ministers often used to say that Labour Members from Birmingham gave them a harder time than Conservative Members. Indeed, Conservative Members also said that Conservative Members from Birmingham gave them a harder time than the Socialists. We all spoke for Birmingham.

On behalf of the city of Birmingham, I resent some of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Ladywood. In her excitement and her desire to serve her constituents, she said that we were talking about a potty little road race. It is not potty to try to bring considerable publicity and hope to one's people.

Ms. Short: If the hon. Gentleman has the race in his constituency, he will lose his seat.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: It is always the easiest argument in the world to say, "Have it near you." For 30 years as a councillor and as a Member of this place I have argued in favour of issues which I believed were for the wider good of Birmingham. The people of Ladywood need prosperity as much as any and more than many. They need things like the Olympics—a glorious £2 million failure, but which still bought us a lot of publicity—a motor race, the convention centre, the city of Birmingham symphony orchestra or even the Birmingham royal ballet. Those things help to give people a vision of Birmingham.

Labour colleagues of the hon. Member for Ladywood must resent the fact that time after time she mentioned the phrases, "deeply dishonourable", "misleading" or "if the truth was told." As far as I can tell, the only good point that the hon. Member for Ladywood would make about her colleagues is that they were deeply dishonourable, but with good intent. I have never known anyone be deeply dishonourable with good intent. There is either good intent about what the city council, on behalf of the people wished to do, or there is not. It cannot be deeply dishonourable to tell the truth if it could be told or to tell people that they deliberately mislead and then try to say, "I know that they do it with the best intentions." On sober reflection, I hope that the hon. Member for Ladywood will withdraw what she said.

If a proposal produces a vast amount of advertising, that is not fraudulent. Why do people want their names on racing cars? Why do they want to have the Barclays Football League? Why should Marlboro appear on racing cars or Kelloggs' symbols on children's television programmes? Such names subliminally and properly make people believe that that is good advertising. Advertising is not something that is handed out like lollipops on street corners or with "Kiss me Quick, Clare" hats at election time. It is all part of an overall strategy.

The city council is not dishonourable, not even with good intent. It is honourable with the good intent of trying to round off what some of us have spent 30 years of our lives doing: making people worldwide look on Birmingham not as a narrow provincial city, but as a place with vision.

Alderman Harry Whatton was a great Labour leader of the city of Birmingham. When he signed the £23 million contract all those years ago for the national exhibition centre, I remember telling him that we would either end up in prison or as heroes. Happily, we did not end up in prison.

Mr. Corbett: I believe that the hon. Gentleman meant to use the word "publicity" instead of "advertising". My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) stated that the reporting of the road race by ITV through Central and by the BBC in this country and in 30 other countries round the world was not space that we could have bought even if we had wanted to.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman. I meant to include publicity.

Ever since 1956, when I was elected as a councillor for the local division of my hon. Friend the Member for Yardley, the council has had vision. The road race is part of that continuing vision. I sympathise with people whose lives are interrupted—for example, taxi drivers who moan because they cannot get their taxis through, and people from the vegetable market who moan about the race day—but we all need a prosperous Birmingham. Business may be interrupted one day to give prosperity the next day. I hope that Birmingham Members of Parliament can look further than being eight against four. I should like to think that, for the future of our city, whatever the inconvenience, we are 12 for all.

9.45 pm

Mr. Jeff Rooker (Birmingham, Perry Barr): It is a pity that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) was not present to support the city council on Second Reading. He was not in the House to

speak or to vote. He was conspicuous by his absence. Judging by his speech today, one would think that the hon. Gentleman was present that day. The same applies to other Conservative Members from the city of Birmingham. It is not the cosy arrangement that one would suppose. Some hon. Members are conscious of finances. We are well aware that, during next year's local election, Conservative Members will attack the Labour-controlled city council for its record over the past six years—the longest period that Labour has been in power since the war. The council will go on for at least 10 years. Conservative Members will attack the council for whatever poll tax is set—whether it is £240 or £340. However, included in the poll tax will be a subvention for the road race.

Underlying all our debates, our primary objection has been the way in which finances have been handled. It was never intended that ratepayers' or poll tax payers' money should be used to subsidise the road race. It was clearly and explicitly stated that that would not happen, and arrangements were made to make sure that it would not happen. I disregard debates about whether it will take three or five years to break even. Leaving aside revenue costs, we even thought that we had an arrangement for capital costs. We thought that capital costs had been so arranged that it would be possible, as my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) said in her press release, to spend money on roofs, gutters and eliminating black mould. We know now that that is not the case. That is our central objection.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) said that, this year, the race will cost ratepayers £17,000, as though, for a city with a budget of £1 billion, £17,000 does not matter. Birmingham city council is so strapped for cash that 150 disabled people have not been granted bus passes. The council was unable to find the £15,000 to fund their bus passes. That gives an idea of what a council can do with £17,000.

Birmingham city council is not a high-spending authority. Anyone who knows Birmingham would say that it spends too little in some areas. It is £96 a head below average metropolitan districts, as was shown by last week's statement by the Secretary of State for the Environment. It is a question of priorities. We should leave aside the benefits that might accrue from the road race—the publicity and advertising—which I separate in revenue terms from the other issues raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath, such as the NEC and the international convention centre, which are wholly different. Those issues are on different planets from the road race.

We must consider the financial arrangements and the overall benefits to the city. I am the first to make the point that one must be careful when painting the whole picture of our urban areas. On the one hand, we want new and better investment in our great cities from the public and private sectors. That is crucial across the country. But on the other hand, the dilemma for those of us who represent the arguments of the people who are downtrodden and ignored, who get second best, who have had a bad start, who end up in rotten housing or with rotten or no jobs and who are involved in a cycle of deprivation, is that if we highlight those facts to fight for something better, we are told that we are doing our city down. We have to strike a balance.

So far, to its credit, Birmingham has never put a homeless person or family into a bed-and-breakfast hotel. Never. That is a massive plus for Birmingham city council, but the housing crisis in our city is now so great that within a couple of years—by the time that the five-star Hyatt hotel opens, with its £2 million of ratepayers' money; at the very time the international convention centre opens; and the fifth or sixth year of the road race—there will be a cardboard city in Birmingham. There is no question about that. Under the present financial arrangements we cannot cope with our housing crisis. That means that we must look at the full cost of an enterprise such as the road race.

Dame Jill Knight *rose*—

Mr. Rooker: I shall not give way to the hon. Lady—*[Interruption.]* No, I shall not. I was cut short with only seven minutes and had a closure motion moved on me in our previous debate on this and I am sure that it will happen again before 10 o'clock this evening. Although I have a lot to say, I shall not because there will be time later on. I simply want to make a few preliminary points. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) is on one of her rare visits to our Birmingham road race debates. She is an assiduous attender of the House, but not at these debates.

I turn first to the true overall cost. The point that my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath so robustly made was that, because of the demands that we made under section 14 of the Birmingham City Council Act 1985, our chickens are coming home to roost. But the fact is that not all the social costs of the road race are put into the accounts. The auditors, lawyers and accountants have found it convenient to include some of the pluses, such as the £600,000 worth of promotion, but they are not willing to include the social costs of the road race. I shall mention just one of those costs—delays. The cost of publicity may be something on which one cannot easily put a figure, but I understand that the sum of £600,000 has been arrived at by looking at all the references to Birmingham in the newspapers and on television and trying to put some value on them. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath concedes that it must be a value judgment.

Let us consider the cost of traffic delays. I shall use the Department of Transport's own figures because we do not build roads willy-nilly in this country: all our roads are subject to a cost-benefit analysis to decide whether they should be single, dual or have three carriageways. We also consider the cost of bridges. The Department of Transport's assessment of the cost of delays caused to what is termed a "working car"—a car containing people travelling to work—is £9·124 per hour. If we take only the periods before and after the racing weekend, and accepting that at rush-hour times most vehicles are working cars with, say, a 15-minute delay per vehicle, for 1,000 cars, the cost is £2,281.

As the full traffic flow figures are not known for the entire circuit, I am using the traffic flow figures for the A38 from the Department of Transport. If we estimate that 1,500 cars were held up for 15 minutes, twice daily, for 20 working days between July to September, excluding the race weekend, the delay would cost, at 1988 figures, £136,860. The estimate does not include lorries. That dislocation to travel and transport in Birmingham is the

[Mr. Rooker]

social cost of the road race. No one has bothered to put that on the other side of the account which suggests that £600,000 could be derived from promotions. That cost should be investigated.

I am happy to accept the closure when the time comes, but I hope that I shall get the four and a half minutes left to me. I received a letter from the licensee of a brand new restaurant and bar complex in the city centre. He told me that most of his customers on the racing weekend were other licensees who were checking how many customers he had. The bar and restaurant is just outside the racing circuit on the canal, but it is close to the city on the Gas street basin.

It is also important to consider the shift in opinion among Tories on Birmingham city council. The other day, Councillor Zissman, the deputy leader of the Tory group, spoke of the

"spite, narrow-mindedness and obvious prejudice"

of my hon. Friends the Members for Ladywood, for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) and myself. Is this the same Councillor Zissman who said on 14 September that there was

"great concern over the way the accounts were worked out"?

He also said that he wanted to end the subsidisation of the event by ratepayers and he questioned the financial basis of the race.

Those are the very points that have been made by my hon. Friends and myself since the end of 1988 when we found out how the accounts were being set out—because of a change in the interpretation of the preamble to the 1985 Act rather than a section of it. We realised that creative accounting was afoot. Conservative Members should ask themselves questions about their friends on Birmingham city council. It is crucial that the full cost is investigated.

I know that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) must do his bit to shut me up—that is his job—but before he does it is important to consider the latest annual report for Birmingham which says that the Bill

"could pave the way for a Formula 1 Grand Prix to be held in Birmingham"

We all know that the costs of Formula one grand prix are outside the scope of the Bill. They belong to another planet compared with the money we have spoken about. Hon. Members should be aware, however, that this year the British grand prix attracted 500,000 people over three days. There were 1,000 helicopter movements in and out of the circuit and 25 acres of hospitality tents. Is someone suggesting that the circuit round the inner city of Birmingham is a precursor for a grand prix? The figures that I have just given show that that is absolutely crazy. Such a claim is all part of the hype to try to sell a dud product. It is a dud product, because it is sucking up £600,000 of ratepayers' money. The money could be used to repair school playgrounds and to replace the bus passes given to disabled people. I believe that my right hon. Friend the Member for Small Heath shares my belief that those passes should not have been removed. The money could be spent on a host of worthwhile activities.

The race should be made to pay for itself—that was the promise given to our fellow citizens of Birmingham. If such arrangements could be made, I would support the race——

Mr. Denis Howell *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 153, Noes 35.

Division No. 404] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bermingham, Gerald
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Boyes, Roland
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Corbett, Robin
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cox, Tom
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dufly, A. E. P.
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Pendry, Tom
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Snape, Peter
Speller, Tony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David

Trotter, Neville
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr Andrew Hargreaves and
Mr. David Gilroy-Bevan.

NOES

Callaghan, Jim
Clay, Bob
Cousins, Jim
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eastham, Ken
Flynn, Paul
Hardy, Peter
Haynes, Frank
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Illsley, Eric
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Lamond, James
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Mullin, Chris
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Rooker, Jeff
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Vaz, Keith
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Question put accordingly:—
The House divided: Ayes 152, Noes 26.

Division No. 405] **[10.11 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Ames, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bermingham, Gerald
Boswell, Tim
Boyes, Roland
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Corbett, Robin
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cox, Tom
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dalyell, Tam
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Duffy, A. E. P.
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Fallon, Michael
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hardy, Peter
Harris, David
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Haynes, Frank
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hind, Kenneth
Home Robertson, John
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Pendry, Tom
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Sackville, Hon Tom
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Snape, Peter
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'lord)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wiggin, Jerry
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Andrew Hargreaves and
Mr. David Gilroy-Bevan.

NOES

Callaghan, Jim
Clay, Bob
Cousins, Jim
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Eastham, Ken
Flynn, Paul
Hinchliffe, David
Illsley, Eric
Lamond, James
Lewis, Terry
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Nellist, Dave
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Rooker, Jeff
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Spearing, Nigel
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Bob Cryer and
Mr. Harry Barnes.

Question agreed to.

Ordered,

That the Promoters of the Birmingham City Council (No. 2) Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid.

Ordered,

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House.

Ordered,

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session.

Ordered,

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table.

Ordered,

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session.

Ordered,

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

Environment

10.22 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Heathcoat-Amory): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 8030/89 on a European Environment Agency and a European Environment Monitoring and Information Network and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum submitted by the Department of the Environment on 19th October 1989 and 9785/86 on the Fourth Environmental Action Programme (1987-1992); supports the Government's view that the proposal for a European Environment Agency and a European Environment Monitoring and Information Network provides the most appropriate means of enhancing a sound data base to inform and support Community environmental policy; and approves in general the guidelines for the Community's Fourth Environmental Action Programme.

[Relevant documents: European Community Documents Nos. 9182/88 on public access to information on the environment and 8882/89 on environment and natural resource information collection.]

I welcome the opportunity to discuss three important aspects of community legislation: first, the proposal to establish a European environment agency; secondly, the fourth environmental action programme; thirdly, public access to information on the environment. I shall address each of the issues in turn. I start by setting out—

[Interruption.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I ask hon. Members who are not taking part in the debate to leave the Chamber quickly and quietly.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I shall start by setting out the background to the proposed European environment agency. The president of the Commission, Mr. Delors, in a speech to the European Parliament in January, spoke of the need to set up a European environmental measurement and verification system

"to inform and support Community environmental policy."

The argument is that such a system on a European scale to monitor environmental quality and trends does not now exist. At present there is no guarantee that the results of environmental monitoring are comparable Communitywide. In response to this need, the Commission has drawn up a regulation to establish a European environment agency to act as a co-ordinating point, bringing together environmental information from existing national and regional networks for the use of the Commission and of member states.

There is widespread agreement throughout the Community that the establishment of such an agency would be highly desirable. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment welcomed the initiative in principle at the September meeting of the Environment Council. The creation of an independent body to enhance a sound environmental database will bring substantial benefits. Not only will it provide a firmer base for developing Community environmental policy, but it should remove many arguments about facts and figures from political dispute. In the United Kingdom our environmental monitoring arrangements are well established and comprehensive. For example, the national survey of air pollution was set up in 1961 and has registered a significant decrease in smoke and sulphur dioxide concentration in the past 30 years. The setting up of the agency would encourage the development of systems to provide comparable information in other Community countries so that the overall picture becomes clearer.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Can my hon. Friend tell me whether the new agency will have the power to require member states or firms or bodies within member states to provide the information that it requires?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: It will not have coercive powers. It will operate on a voluntary basis, but I shall come on to that later in my remarks.

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): Surely that is not so, as that is our Government's position in relation to negotiating exactly what powers the agency should have and it has not yet been decided whether there should be powers of compulsion to provide the information.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The draft regulations make it clear that it will not have those coercive powers. There is also consensus among member states that it should not have such powers.

The regulation is now the subject of negotiations in Brussels. Explanatory memoranda have been submitted to the House summarising the present position and last Wednesday my officials gave evidence on the agency proposals to the Select Committee on the Environment, the report of which was tabled today.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Where does the Minister expect the agency to be located, and what will be the Government's recommendations in that respect?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: If the hon. Gentleman will wait, I shall come to that, but the short answer is that we hope that it will be located in Britain.

I wish to say a little about the negotiations and the points still to be resolved, one of which has been mentioned by the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh). They also concern the precise remit for the agency, its status and structure, the arrangements for establishing and running the underlying information network, and the possible role of non-Community countries.

First, we think that the work of the agency should be confined to assembling, co-ordinating and analysing data to provide an authoritative source of environmental information for the Community. Our firm view is that the agency should not have an interventionist role such as enforcement, nor should it have the right to initiate policy. Such responsibilities rest with national Governments and the European Commission under treaty powers. It would be quite wrong to delegate such functions to a third party such as the agency. Moreover, we see the benefits of the agency essentially lying in its neutrality and independence as a highly regarded professional body which will be open for use by the Commission, by national Governments and by the public.

It should nevertheless be stressed that there are other existing highly reputable international organisations involved with assembling and analysing data. I am thinking particularly of the United Nations Environment Programme and Community bodies such as the statistical office and the joint research centre. There is a clear requirement that the agency should not duplicate the work of such organisations but should draw on their expertise and experience.

[Mr. Heathcoat-Amory]

It is proposed that the agency should be a small organisation comprising about 20 professional staff headed by an executive director with a management board comprising delegates from each member state and from the Commission, assisted by a scientific committee to steer the work of the agency. We welcome the proposal that the agency should be a small body and I am sure that hon. Members would agree that we should not wish to create any major extension to Community bureaucracy. It is notable that the restriction on size is due in a large extent to Britain's having pressed the idea when the agency was first mooted.

Regarding the network, the regulation proposes to require member states to identify and notify to the agency within three months the main component elements of their monitoring network. That timetable assumes that suitable networks already exist in member states and merely need to be brought together. We know that that is not the case and that arrangements for collecting information vary widely. That points to a need to extend the three-month period proposed for setting up the network. Further, there should be no legal requirement to provide information. I hope that that meets the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor). We believe that the agency will operate successfully only in an atmosphere of voluntary trust and co-operation.

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way and I warmly welcome him to his post. Will the collection of data allow the agency to assist our agencies with matters such as the catastrophe which occurred at Rutland Water in my constituency recently, when blue-green algae resulted in the deaths of a considerable number of dogs and sheep? I am getting no sense from the National Rivers Authority or from Anglian Water about the reason why this occurred, but we need proper data and information. I expect to see the Minister about that shortly.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I thank my hon. Friend for his welcome. I confirm that the agency will pull together data in addition to analysing it in a form that is readily digestible. My hon. Friend, his constituents or any member of the public will have access to those data. It will assist my hon. Friend to obtain a clearer picture of what went wrong in Rutland, which should assist remedial action.

It obviously makes sense for information to be drawn together for Europe as a whole, as the Community cannot be regarded as an island. Issues of transfrontier pollution are of vital importance. We believe that third countries should be invited to participate in the agency, and that initially that should be on an informal and advisory basis. Clearly, we should wish to avoid third countries directing the work of the agency without the approval of Community member states.

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): What communications have there been with the Council of Europe, particularly through the Council of Ministers? It seems more appropriate for the agency to be a Council of Europe initiative, rather than just an EEC initiative.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I cannot confirm what communications have been received from the Council of Europe, but informal approaches have been made by other European states which in the longer term wish to participate in the work of the agency.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Is the Minister saying that the EEC environmental agency will supplement or replace the National Rivers Authority, or does he think that the NRA, under the Government appointee, Lord Crickhowell, is not up to the job? Will the agency supplement the NRA, add to it or make it work?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The agency will not supplant the work of the NRA, which is set on a firm foundation and which will, I am sure, do excellent work under its appointed chairman.

Other member states have expressed much support for the United Kingdom position. The agency proposal is due to be discussed at the Environment Council on 28 November, and with such a high degree of consensus the French presidency hopes for political agreement on the general terms of the regulation.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has not only publicly welcomed the idea of the agency but has offered to host it in the United Kingdom. We believe that the United Kingdom has a strong case and that siting it here would afford opportunity for links with the many centres of excellence in this country. I am sure that the House will support our efforts to have the agency sited in this country.

The fourth environmental action programme is the second subject to be discussed today. On 19 October 1987, the Environment Council adopted a resolution which notes and approves in general the guidelines of the fourth environmental action programme 1987-92. It also welcomes the Single European Act which introduced an environmental chapter into the treaty of Rome. The action programme represents the Commission's agenda for future environment policy and outlines its ideas for specific proposals. It is not legally binding. The member states approved its overall approach through a general resolution without commitment to any of the detailed proposals. The Commission is free to select which proposals to develop, whether they be in this programme or not.

Agreement has already been reached on many parts of the action programme, including directives on vehicle emissions, pesticide use, reductions in pollution from large-scale coal-fired power stations, control of major accident hazards and the protection of workers. Regulations governing trade in endangered species of animals and plants and restrictions on pesticides and chlorofluorocarbons have also been adopted. The Government have played a leading role in shaping those agreements. The programme also stresses the need for improved public access to information on the environment, which the Government fully endorse. We therefore warmly welcome the fundamental principles embodied in the current draft directive on public access to environmental information, which is the third item under discussion today.

We have long endorsed these principles at home. We have welcomed the recommendation of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution that there should be a presumption in favour of unrestricted public access to information held by pollution control authorities and we have made substantial progress in providing for that

access. The Water Act 1989, for example, provides for public registers of water pollution controls. There are registers of notices dealing with air pollution and pesticides. We recently proposed a major extension of the system of public registers under our proposals for the new systems of integrated pollution control and local authority air pollution control.

We have pursued the same goal in Brussels. During our last presidency of the Community we proposed a resolution calling for

"unrestricted access throughout the Community to information which pollution control authorities obtain or receive by virtue of their legislative powers, with provision for secrecy only in those circumstances where a genuine case for it can be substantiated on the grounds of commercial confidentiality or national security or other appropriate grounds".

Such access can only be good for all parties—for industry and for the public. Secrecy breeds suspicion, suspicion breed doubts, doubts breed fears, and fears help no one. Our commitment to the principles of the draft directive is unequivocal.

As I have already made clear, the approach that we have embraced in Britain for providing access to information is based on public registers. It provides easy access to all the important information in a readily digestible form. All parties know what is involved. The administrative burden is more containable. A number of our Community partners have adopted the same approach. We are keen to ensure that it will be viewed as fully answering the spirit and the letter of the draft directive. We also believe that further work is needed to make explicit the concepts behind the text and to clarify the phraseology.

With those provisos, we welcome the directive. We are taking an active part in working to clarify and refine the text. Our aim, which I have no doubt that the House will share, is to secure a clear and watertight directive which will ensure that there is a full, fair and workable system of public access to environmental information and that it is provided throughout the Community. I invite the House to comment on these three items of Community business and I shall do my best to respond to any points later in the debate, or afterwards if that is more appropriate.

10.37 pm

Mr. Allan Roberts (Bootle): The issues before us have not been finally resolved in Europe. Some of the decisions to which the Minister referred are not final decisions but cases being argued by the Government in Europe, no doubt with the support of some other member countries.

I should like to speak mainly about the European environment agency, the fourth environmental action programme and public access to environmental information. The motion calls for the House to note the EC documents on the establishment of a European environment agency and a European environment monitoring and information network. We have before us the draft regulations for the establishment of a Eurowide agency and the proposals listing the sort of environmental action programme issues that would be the subject of inquiry by the agency and network.

Public access to environmental information is important. The Government are going part of the way towards satisfying the Opposition's demands. The latest Community proposals are pretty comprehensive. They originate from the Commission's statement to the European Parliament on 16 January 1989, as the Minister said. The Labour party strongly supports the establishment of this kind of information collection and research agency and verification system to ensure that individual European countries have their records, claims and statistics about the environment verified.

As usual, Her Majesty's Government have given only a half-hearted welcome to the measure. They claim to welcome the proposals. They say that they accept that such a European environmental monitoring network should be established, but they do not want it to be constituted in such a way as to make it really effective. Indeed, they have admitted as much tonight. As usual, the Government

"Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer".

They are adopting their usual tactic of trying to slow down the agency's implementation and insisting on restricting its functioning, so preventing an effective agency from being established.

They do not want the agency to have power to require member countries to provide information. What would be the point of such a body? The Government believe that the agency's mandate should be confined to collecting and co-ordinating statistical data. They do not want it to undertake any enforcement role or to have the right to initiate policy.

The Labour party does not want the agency to usurp the powers of the Commission or of sovereign Parliaments in Europe. But the right to propound or advocate policy initiatives would not necessarily do that. The right of inquiry and the right to require member states to provide information would not do that. The agency cannot function effectively if it cannot require those involved to provide information and give evidence. Once established, the agency must have power to force member states to give evidence and permit inquiry into records and institutions.

The Government claim that co-operation and willing participation should be the way forward. We do not believe that the Government would co-operate in exposing their own polluting record. It is not surprising that they are unwilling to establish an agency with legal powers to take action or require action to be initiated. In view of the Government's record—on rewriting environment statistics and avoiding EEC directives and initiatives on the environment—they see this agency as another means by which their appalling record would be exposed.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): Considering that 18 months ago the hon. Gentleman and his party would have denounced this proposal from the Commission as a gross piece of interference in British policy, but are now pretending to be pro-European and are welcoming this proposal, perhaps the hon. Gentleman will explain why we should listen to the pompous lecture that he is now giving, when the Government have an excellent record on proposing green and anti-pollution measures?

Mr. Roberts: The hon. Gentleman does not have to listen. He can go home if he does not want to hear common sense. There is no point in establishing an agency that does not have power to carry out its responsibilities, and that means effectively monitoring and controlling.

A strong agency would expose, for example, Her Majesty's Government's refusal to set a date for implementing the EEC directive on bathing beaches. Perhaps the Minister will give details of the real condition

[Mr. Roberts]

of our drinking water and beaches. People living near the beaches know the state they are in. They are polluted along the length of our coastline.

Polluting private water companies have been exempted by the Government from prosecution. That would be an ideal subject for the agency to investigate. No wonder the Government want to limit its scope and power.

What we are discussing does not have much to do with the Common Market, for we are talking of a Europewide agency that would cover all European countries wishing to co-operate in the provision of environmental statistics. This has nothing to do with whether one is pro or anti-EEC.

Is it possible that Her Majesty's Government would wish to co-operate freely in the collection of statistics and information about nitrate fertiliser pollution, the overuse of harmful pesticides and the effect of that on drinking water and on polluting our rivers and coastal waterways? That would make a very good subject for a European agency inquiry.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Given that the hon. Gentleman said that in these issues he is not pro or anti the Community and therefore he is trying desperately to be fair, will he acknowledge that this country is by no means behind in terms of chasing European standards for environmental cleanliness? Will he also acknowledge that the world waterskiing championships in Barcelona were cancelled because the skiers did not want to ski on raw sewage? That would not have happened if the championships had been held off our shores.

Mr. Roberts: At times, the Government are successful at cobbling something together with other polluting nations such as Spain and France which are not famous for their concern for the environment. Other countries are at fault as well as Britain. However, Britain does not have a particularly good record. We are being prosecuted by the Community because of our drinking water and we are in breach of the Community directive on bathing beaches. Only Britain amoing the western European countries has exempted private water companies from prosecution for pollution because of the Government's desire to make water a successful flotation.

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that Britain's record is one of the best in Europe? He is implying that Britain is competing for the bottom place.

Mr. Roberts: We are one of the worst countries in Europe in this respect. We are known as the dirty man of Europe.

The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Chris Patten): How many infraction proceedings for breaches of environmental directives have been brought against this country in the European Court of Justice?

Mr. Roberts: I would love to tell the House, but I do not know. Perhaps the Secretary of State will tell us. We are the only country that refuses to join the 30 per cent. club of countries that are supposed to be reducing sulphur emissions. We are the only country to wage a major campaign against the catalytic converter, claiming that the lean-burn engine would solve the problems. The Secretary of State has only assumed his new position because of the chaos caused by his predecessor in relation to our record on the environment and the EC. The facts were altered under the previous Secretary of State and we were pilloried continually and rightly for failing to take the necessary action required by the EC, not just in terms of the directives, but in all the discussions. In the Council of Ministers and elsewhere in Europe, Britain has been fighting a rearguard action to slow progress down. We did that with the catalytic converters and many other things.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): My hon. Friend need not take too much notice of the Secretary of State for the Environment. He recently visited Bradford and poured praise on the Tory clique there. The Tory council in Bradford is about to embark on a major breach of the green belt in Bradford—which is already far too small. That is the sort of action that this supposedly green Secretary of State supports.

Mr. Roberts: I can understand the Secretary of State wanting an agency that does not have any powers to compel evidence or information to be provided, particularly as that would show up the Government's record on the environment. Our drinking water and the pollution of our rivers and coastal waters by nitrates and fertilisers would be an ideal subject for an agency inquiry. However, the Government would not want their record on those issues exposed.

If the system was voluntary, the Government would not co-operate with such an inquiry or provide the accurate information required. Would they co-operate in a statistical inquiry into the pollution of the atmosphere unless they were forced to? The Minister was seeking praise for the Government's record. As I said earlier, the Government refuse to join the 30 per cent. group of countries that want to reduce sulphur emissions. Unlike Germany, which is retro-fitting nearly all its fossil fuel power stations, this country is retro-fitting only one before the next general election and the retro-fitting of Fiddler's Ferry power station has been cancelled.

Of course, a Euro agency investigating the Government's real record on CFCs—not the one covered by their publicity statements—and on the ozone layer would be embarrassing to the Government, as would their appalling and abysmal record of energy and transport policies, which will continue to increase carbon dioxide emissions until at least the year 2000. The United Kingdom contributes 10 per cent. of the world's total production of CFCs—a massive amount. The Prime Minister hosted a conference at which she made a speech about the problem and then said that the free market should deal with it. She and the Government still refuse to ban CFCs in aerosols.

By having an effective ban on aerosols, the Government would meet their obligations as outlined by the Montreal agreement. Even if Britain reduced the present use of CFCs by 90 per cent., we would still use more CFCs than India does. ICI is the world's second largest producer of CFCs and the largest producer in Europe. Britain produces three times more CFCs than India and China together. Last year, the United Kingdom exported CFCs to 117 countries, 80 of which have not signed the Montreal agreement. The United Kingdom is the largest exporter of CFCs in Europe.

We are reducing the use of CFCs in this country by 50 per cent. but production by only 35 per cent., and are selling the difference to developing countries as though they have a different ozone layer. The Government would not want their record on glabal warming adequately to be exposed; nor do they wish to provide information. Because of their energy and transport policies, the Government will remain one of the main contributors to the production of greenhouse gases, despite their lip service to the problem in the Netherlands. CEGB energy projections given to the House of Commons Select Committee on Energy were that, in the year 2005, carbon dioxide production in the electricity supply industry in England and Wales will be up to 26 per cent. greater than in 1987.

The biggest source of carbon dioxide emissions is power stations. The second biggest source is transport. Under this Government, vehicle traffic miles will increase by 83 per cent. to 142 per cent. by the year 2025. The Open university calculates that carbon dioxide emissions will increase by 60 million to 130 million tonnes, on top of the 98 million tonnes now being emitted from road traffic. They are the Government's policies and their own projections, yet they pay lip service to doing something about the greenhouse effect. The truth is that they do not want their record on this issue to be adequately investigated by a European environmental agency.

Do the Government really want their record on this save-the-world issue to be the subject of EEC agency scrutiny? Of course not. They will avoid that at any cost. Why do they not want non-EEC European countries to be involved in such an agency? To exclude, perhaps, the environmentally conscious and concerned Scandinavian countries. If Norway, Sweden and Denmark were involved and, perhaps, Austria and other countries, we could never muster the anti-environmental majority that we sometimes manage to cobble together in the EEC. The British Government object also to identifying and notifying to the agency within three months of its establishment the main elements in our national environmental monitoring networks. Surely we do not need more than three months just to tell the agency what we already have. It is a delaying tactic by the Government.

The Government ask how confidentiality would be dealt with. That is another red herring. It would be dealt with in the same way as it is dealt with in similar institutions and organisations. No claim for commercial confidentiality should be allowed to justify a refusal to provide the truth about industries' polluting activities.

What is required is the establishment of a European environmental agency, but beyond the boundaries of the EEC, and a monitoring and information network. However, that will be effective only in the context of a British environmental protection agency. Indeed, that should be a keystone of any green Bill that the Government introduce and is the answer to those who say that power would move away from Britain with the establishment of a European agency. We need a really powerful British protection agency, with powers to enforce pollution control and to bring together control of land, water and air pollution. The principle of integrated pollution control should be established—I hope that it will be—in the Government's green Bill.

An environmental protection agency should be established and given real powers to criticise and prosecute industry—private and public—local authorities, central Government institutions and Ministries. It should be truly independent of Government and take over the National Rivers Authority and other inspectorates, such as Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution. It should have adequate staffing and resources. A Ministry of Environmental Protection should be established, with its own inspectorate and establishment. A Labour Government would carry all those suggestions into law.

The public have a right to know. Access to information is fundamental to environment protection. While industry can keep secret its discharges, waste products and processes, it will continue to be, at best, a source of suspicion. The Environmental Protection Agency that has been established in the United States of America is linked with a Community Right To Know Act. That should form a blueprint for the type of legislation that is required in this country and in Europe. Such legislation would be vital for the satisfactory working of an EPA. It would also aid the work of the Department of the Environment. The United States right-to-know legislation calls for access to information on the amount of raw material entering a works, the products, the amount of waste and the type of waste treatment or disposal route. Under a Labour Government, industry would not—it should not now—be allowed to use commercial confidentiality to deny freedom of access to information about discharges into the environment.

When the Secretary of State was given his present job, we issued a 10-point challenge to see whether the Government were serious about their attitude to the environment and to the fourth Community environmental action programme. We wanted to know whether policies really had changed since the former Secretary of State was sent off to the Department of Trade and Industry. We asked the present Secretary of State to reverse the exemptions from prosecution for causing pollution that have been given to private water companies and to set dates when Britain will comply with EEC directives on bathing beaches and drinking water standards. The Department of the Environment, under the new Secretary of State, has refused to do so. To help reduce global warming, we wanted the Secretary of State to launch a programme of energy conservation and to make available Government grants. The former Secretary of State for Energy cut the previous programme. A new programme still has not been launched and there has been no reversal of policy.

We called on the Government to join the club of European countries that are committed to reducing sulphur emissions by 30 per cent. to prevent acid rain, but this Secretary of State takes the same attitude as the previous one. We asked the Government to reverse the decision on the Rose theatre site and to make it a scheduled ancient monument, but this Secretary of State is as concerned about our heritage as the previous one was. We asked this Secretary of State to establish, in co-operation with local government, a programme to recover CFCs already banked in the environment in disused fridges, but the Department has refused to do so. We said that this Secretary of State should abandon the proposals of the previous Secretary of State to privatise waste disposal. However, the Government still intend to establish arm's-length companies to run waste disposal services and to privatise waste disposal. They intend to put the control of monitoring toxic waste into the market, where the profit motive will be more important than concern for the environment.

[Mr. Roberts]

We asked this Secretary of State to restrict imports of toxic waste into Britain, but he has refused to do so. We asked the Secretary of State to bring forward a comprehensive dog registration scheme; he refuses to do so. We have asked him to support the speedy implementation of the three-way catalytic converter into all types of British vehicle, accepting the 1991 date for small vehicles that was proposed by Europe, but he refuses to do so. We asked the Secretary of State to abandon Nick Ridley's—[HON. MEMBERS: "Order."] Conservative Members seem to want to be here long into the night. We asked him to abandon the decision of the former Secretary of State to dismantle the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission. On all counts the Government have been found wanting.

The Secretary of State has done hardly anything since he took over the job. The EC environmental action programme will expose that failure, especially if the agency is given the power to require evidence.

10.59 pm

Mr. Robert B. Jones (Hertfordshire, West): The Government's support for environmental improvements is amply demonstrated by the presence of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. He takes such issues seriously, and this is an important debate. How sad it is that the shadow Secretary of State could not be bothered to attend to hear what the House had to say.

The hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts), for some reason which is no doubt obvious to other hon. Members, gave way until he gave way to my right hon. Friend who asked him a pertinent question. He asked how many prosecutions there had been against the United Kingdom. The hon. Gentleman said that he did not know the answer. This debate is about European statistics, but the hon. Gentleman has not collected any. I shall give the answer. Between 1983 and 1989, there were no prosecutions against the United Kingdom Government by the European Court, in comparison with 64 prosecutions against other European Community countries. That is the mark of our Government's sincerity in comparison with others.

It is true that action has been taken against the United Kingdom on water standards, but, in common with other hon. Friends, I find it curious that no action has been taken against other member states. When the Select Committee on the Environment visited Italy during its consideration of the problems of contaminated land and toxic waste, the local authorities in Milan told us that all the sewage from Milan and the surrounding suburbs is discharged straight into the River Po and out into the Adriatic. What action has been taken against the Italian Government? None. It is no coincidence that the European environmental Commissioner happens to be an Italian.

This is an important matter. That is why the Select Committee on the Environment thought it right to consider the issue to try to come up with a report for the House in time for this debate. That report is ready, and I shall refer to its various recommendations.

It is right that our Government should welcome the creation of the European Environment Agency. They did not do so half-heartedly, as the hon. Member for Bootle suggested. Civil servants giving evidence to the Select Committee told us that the Government warmly welcomed the proposal. It is wecome because one cannot develop environmental policy without the reliable statistics necessary to establish what corrective action should be taken and what directives should be issued by the Commission. Unlike some of my hon. Friends, I believe that it is natural for environmental policy to be considered at European level, precisely because so much pollution is transboundary that it can be dealt with only through international co-operation.

It would be helpful to the House if we considered the recommendations—they were unanimous—of the Select Committee. The Committee considered the powers of the agency. I shall quote those recommendations verbatim, so that no misinterpretation is possible. The Select Committee said:

"We agree with the Department of the Environment that the proposed Agency should not be intrusive of Member States whether by way of inspection, enforcement of policy making. We would support any proposal to ensure that its duties are carefully defined and do not go beyond acting in an advisory capacity. In view of its proposed functions, we consider that its full title—with its inevitable reminders of the United States Environmental Protection Agency—is misleading; and feel that it would be more appropriate to limit the name".

If the agency were to have executive powers, it would involve the creation of a huge bureaucracy which would have to draw together the different experiences and abilities of member states. That may be possible in the dim and distant future, but it is not practical if we are to get the agency going now.

The second Select Committee recommendation referred to the Corine programme and the avoidance of duplication and overlapping. There are other agencies collecting statistics—the European Environmental Statistics Office, the United Nations organisation to which my hon. Friend the Minister referred and others—and it is important to ensure that statistics are not duplicated. I questioned civil servants on that point but I did not receive a satisfactory answer. When I asked about the European Environmental Statistics Office, Mr. MacCormack, on behalf of the Department, said:

"We have got one of those already."

I asked:

"What is the difference between the two?"

He replied:

"The Statistical Office, in as far as it looks at environmental statistics, for example, is very much concerned with numbers and collecting numbers and not with the analysis of such numbers, so that it is the provision of pure statistics; whereas the Agency is seen as more than that. It is seen as dealing with scientific environmental information and going further than just pure statistics."

In that case, why cannot the remit of the European Environmental Statistics Office be widened so that it collects the numbers and analyses them as well? Why do we have to have two such bodies? Cannot some saving be made in trying to bring the statistics together?

Thirdly, the Select Committee felt that at present the agency should be limited to members of the Community in order to get it off the ground. In due course it will be sensible to bring in other states within Europe—not just western Europe, but eastern Europe and beyond. As I have already said, many of the issues of transboundary pollution go far wider than just EEC member states.

However, in practical terms it seems sensible to start with a proposal that can get off the ground rather than one that would fall at the first fence.

Among the issues that have to be tackled are the financial and voting rights of non-EEC Governments. One of the Select Committee's recommendations is that when the negotiations take place, procedures should be developed so that in due course non-member states that wish to take part can do so on proper terms.

There was reference earlier to the involvement of non-governmental organisations—NGOs. I do not think that it would be right to lose the benefit of the immense experience and statistical base that many of those organisations have, whether they are European bodies collecting statistics for a particular industry or organisations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. Unlike the French presidency, the Select Committee did not feel that it was appropriate for NGOs to be represented on the management board because it would be difficult to determine which NGOs should be represented, how they should be appointed and so on. However, we would wish to see their experience drawn on to the maximum extent through co-operation.

Also, there is the question of location. The Select Committee strongly supported the Government's stance on wishing to see the agency located in the United Kingdom. We have tremendous expertise. The British Antarctic Survey is just one source of that expertise. It would be appropriate to seek to have the agency located in the United Kingdom in conjunction with one of the distinguished academic bodies located here already.

One domestic point involves the staffing of Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution and the Department of the Environment. The Committee recognised that the creation of this agency would not have a huge impact on such staffing, but clearly it would have some. When I questioned civil servants on this matter, I did not receive a clear answer about whether there would be an appropriate increase in staffing levels to deal with the work involved. I hope that this point will be taken on board in due course.

The Select Committee has produced this report, which I hope will be helpful to the Government and the House. This is a most useful debate to take place at this time, with the consideration of what to do being due on 28 November which is not far away. I commend the report to the House.

11.10 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I shall not detain the House long, but I wish to say one or two things, none of them in agreement with the speeches that I have heard.

The Government have been telling us that they are in favour of this European environment agency, and would even like its headquarters to be in some green glade somewhere in the United Kingdom. All that sounds very good, but it is not as good as it sounds because we are not at all happy about the Government's attitude to the scope and powers of the proposed agency.

The hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) will not be surprised to learn that the position that I am about to adopt is different from his. The Prime Minister's much-advertised concern about the environment was symbolised by that zonker—if that is the proper word—of a headline which appeared in the *Evening Standard* last week, "Thatcher's plan to save the world". If the Prime Minister is as determined about these matters as she says she is—I am not questioning that—we would have expected a much more positive reaction to the proposal than we have seen.

This proposal is for a network to deal with atmospheric emissions and quality, water resources and their quality, the marine environment. soil erosion and pollution and nature conservancy, which includes land use.

I have no doubt—it seems to be agreed across the House—that there is a good case for a common statistical unit on pollution. As the Minister said, monitoring procedures vary across the Community, so it is difficult to obtain proper comparisons. Therefore, it would be good to do so. For example, diesel emissions from vehicles are measured differently; some countries measure it by smoke density and others by what are called suspended particulates. In case any hon. Member wishes to interrupt to ask me what a suspended particulate is, I do not know.

Mr. Allan Roberts: It is like a Conservative.

Sir Russell Johnston: I thought that it was like a ministerial statement. The basic point is that there are different systems of measurement and since we are all affected by the pollution, we need common systems. A European monitoring and information network is a good idea.

As the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) said, such a system can be effective only if there is a compulsion element. If not, there is simply a patchwork of information and anything, in any country, which is embarrassing will be concealed, held back and will not be voluntarily and happily provided. I do not see the sense of that.

The supplementary explanatory memorandum that the Government have kindly made available says:

"Arrangements for establishing and running the Network should be based on the principle of free co-operation".

Polluters do not want free co-operation, but to get on with polluting, or they would not be doing it in the first place. It is absurd to suggest that an agency of this sort can be established on that basis.

As the hon. Member for Bootle pointed out two or three times—rightly so—we are talking about a body that has not been established but is about to be discussed and decided on, and about what the Government's attitude to it should be. The Government should adopt the attitude that the agency has some future role in directing environmental matters in a supranational way. It is only sensible that an agency should be able not only to collect statistics but to interpret them and recommend courses of action. It would seem reasonable to leave room for the agency to grow into a regulatory body, if circumstances require. I do not dissent from the view of the hon. Member for Bootle, who wanted a British agency, independent of Government, to regulate pollution. So what is the argument against a European agency? There is no logical argument.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): The EEC has too much power already.

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman should realise——

Mr. Skinner: It will be worse when the Germans get together.

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman should leave behind his characteristically old-fashioned views——

Mr. Skinner *indicated dissent.*

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the hon. Gentleman want me to repeat what I said?

Mr. Skinner: I am listening carefully.

Sir Russell Johnston: The hon. Gentleman should realise that such regulation need not and should not be bureaucratic—it should be controlled by the European Parliament in a proper democratic way.

The Government have approached this too narrowly; worse, they are not taking advantage of a tremendous opportunity for European co-operation to control pollution supranationally. That is what this country should argue for.

11.17 pm

Mr. Michael Morris (Northampton, South): I very much welcome this concept. There is certainly a need to pull together data from across Europe. Those of us who have been appointed to the Council of Europe know that one of the missing elements at present is a common databank and the sharing of experience of environmental matters.

The Minister was right to say that there is a wealth of experience in this country. We have heard about the British Antarctic Survey. This country was also in the vanguard of the campaign to save the whale. It is therefore rather churlish of Opposition Members to denigrate the stance adopted by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, who has consistently suggested ways forward to help to protect the environment, not just in Europe but across the world.

I will certainly support my hon. Friend the Minister's stance. The Commission should be the starting point. Broadcasting was dealt with first by the Commission, but the Council of Europe ended up as the body which provided the transfrontier broadcasting initiative. The 12 member countries of the EEC constitute too narrow a forum to deal with environmental matters—the 23 members of the Council of Europe should all be brought in and play a key role.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister. This is a worthwhile start and I wish him a fair wind.

11.18 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): The issue that I wish to raise is to be found on page 57 of the fourth action plan and concerns remote sensing from space. This important activity would be best done by the agency, and it is inadequately organised now.

A month ago, M. and M. Norman and Company organised in Glasgow a conference on the tropical rain forest. At the conference there was a powerful contribution from Professor Malcolm Wilkins, editor of "Plant Biology" and a distinguished plant biologist. After a great deal of consideration and the application of much knowledge, he took the view that one of the most useful things that Europe could do was to provide remote sensing facilities to countries with rain forest problems. Such facilities could also be used for all sorts of problems on our own continent.

After Professor Wilkins raised the matter, I took it up with the Government and received a reply from the Minister for Overseas Development that I wish briefly to challenge. The Minister's letter says:

"The suggestion that satellite remote sensing could be used for these purposes has come from a number of quarters. We have investigated what can be achieved by using satellites in this area, including through discussions with the World Bank.

Our conclusion is that satellites are a useful tool in monitoring changes in forest area, but that the results obtained are subject to a significant margin of error. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations is using satellite technology as part of their ongoing inventory of global forest resources, which is expected to be completed in the early 1990s. However, it is difficult to identify selective felling or shrubbery regrowth in forests with satellite technology."

No one has suggested that that should be done. Satellite technology is one of the tools, not an overall answer. The letter continues:

"Likewise, satellites cannot tell us much about the health of the forest—for example they may show apparently healthy tree tops in a forest which might, when seen on the ground, have no underbrush and no young trees. In addition, currently available civilian satellites do not provide sufficiently accurate images to detect clearance from some areas of shifting cultivation, which is widely practised in many developing countries."

There are other ways of looking at the important question of the canopy and there is an argument for having at least one or two airships to glide over it. The Government say in the letter:

"We will certainly be keeping abreast of developments in this field, not least through our scientific arm, the Overseas Development Natural Resources Institute (ODNRI), which makes extensive use of satellite information in their land use work. We shall also be active in continuing to consider how satellite techniques and information can help in our collaborative forestry projects in developing countries . . ."

If that is the situation, it is this type of agency which could get the strings together to provide the important finance and techniques, which are expensive, and it should be done on a European rather than a national basis. I am not unreasonable and I do not expect the Minister to answer off the top of his head in his winding-up speech. However, I should like his Department to look carefully at the work of the overseas development department and to find out from the considerable technical advice that is available, and especially from Professor Malcolm Wilkins and his colleagues in the department of botany in Glasgow university, whether something should be done by the agency that is to be set up.

11.23 pm

Mr. Michael Latham (Rutland and Melton): The knowledge of the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on scientific matters is greatly respected and I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister will reply to him appropriately. Perhaps we may come back from space to land and specifically to water, and to the issue that I raised in an intervention during the Minister's speech: the environmental disaster that took place in Rutland Water in my constituency when about 20 dogs—no one knows exactly how many—and 15 sheep died from chewing or eating blue-green algae at the beginning of September or the end of August. I am in favour of an environmental agency and glad to see that the Government support it because I hope that it will enable a database to be established which will bring together the scientific evidence of how such a thing can happen and prevent it from happening in the future.

The explanation given is that this resulted entirely from the interaction of the sun and nutrients in the water, but my constituents are not satisfied. They have not been given an explanation of why it happened in this year, and why only the water in that reservoir caused animal deaths. I have not had any satisfactory explanation, either from Anglian Water or from the National Rivers Authority, although I know that the authority is continuing its investigation.

I have to say with regret to my hon. Friend the Minister that I have been disappointed in the replies that I have received from Ministers to parliamentary questions about this matter. The other day, my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning used the expression "normal seasonal phenomenon". However, the explanation from Anglian Water is that this was an exceptional situation resulting from the exceptional conditions this year. If that is so, it cannot be a normal seasonal phenomenon. They cannot both be right. Such points need clarifying.

I have pressed Anglian Water to pay compensation to the people who have lost animals, and also to the companies that have lost business because of the closure of the reservoir. I regret that that has been rejected. I want the agency to be able to look into, and to draw together, the necessary statistical information about whether this should have been foreseen. The stuff did not build up overnight. It built up over two or three weeks. I have not yet had any satisfactory explanation as to whether this could or should have been foreseen. If sufficient scientific evidence had been available, it should have been available not only on a British but a European basis, to prevent such a thing from ever happening again.

I wish my hon. Friend the Minister a fair wind with setting up this agency, but I want to see it taking the opportunity, as quickly as possible, to draw together the necessary scientific information and to publish it. When I asked my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning to place in the Library the information produced by Dundee university and the National Rivers Authority, I am sorry to say that he ignored that part of my question. As the constituency Member of Parliament, I expect to be supplied with that information by Ministers as quickly as possible. If I do not get it from Ministers, I expect it from the new environmental agency.

Mr. Allan Roberts: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Latham: I do not expect to get it from the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Roberts: The hon. Gentleman has illustrated clearly how damaging information about the environment is not even given to Members of Parliament by a Government who are reluctant to provide it. Now, an agency will be set up in Europe that will not have powers to require that such information to be given to it.

Mr. Latham: I expect to be provided with the information shortly because I shall see the Minister shortly. I expect, on that occasion, to receive the information. I leave my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State with that thought.

11.27 pm

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): I welcome this EC initiative towards the creation of a European environmental agency. What is being offered is a Europewide information system, and the creation of a European standard for information collection and analysis. That is the first and necessary step towards the knowledge on which proper environmental protection action can be based. The proposal builds on, rather than replaces, existing environmental agencies, and will therefore be a co-ordination and co-operation body.

I welcome the comments that show that the international aspect of these matters may be extended beyond the boundaries of the European Community, and the fact that the Government have stated their wish to see EFTA countries included. However, I hope that this desire will not be used merely as an excuse to delay action within the EEC. European Community agencies, once set up, should be the basis from which wider co-operation extends, rather than international agreement being sought before European Community action takes place.

I also welcome the scope of the agency's work, on atmosphere, water and marine environment, biotopes and nature conservation. This is adequate, and allows for future comprehensive action. Article 4(4) says:

"There will be no restrictions to publication of data or its dissemination to the public."

That is an important safeguard, if the agency is to have a watchdog role, but it is a great pity that lack of powers to gather information detracts from this article.

The agency must not be allowed to be a bureaucracy. It must be a functional body working because of the importance and the nature of the environmental tasks which confront the whole of Europe. We are making a small start when we compare the proposed agency with the powers of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. As the agency develops, I ask the Government not to think it down. We must build on these beginnings and construct a proper Europewide organisation that is capable of tackling the immense environmental problems of the continent.

I wish to see the creation of a Scottish environment protection agency working nationally within a European context and ensuring that Scotland's environmental needs are properly met. The proposed merger of the Nature Conservancy Council and the Countryside Commission should present an opportunity to create such a Scottish environment protection body, but it must be properly financed and imaginatively organised.

I note that seven EC states are bidding to house the new European agency, with its annual budget of £3·5 billion. I ask the Government to ensure that it is based in Scotland. With our unique combination of a special environment and universities, as well as existing research institutions, a compelling case can and should be made for the siting of the agency in Scotland. Existing Scottish-based expertise can be of service to the whole of Europe.

I am sure that the Minister will understand that his wish to see it sited somewhere in the United Kingdom is not good enough from my point of view. I wish to hear him say that the agency will go to Scotland. I commend to the Minister's attention the proposals of the Scottish Council (Development and Industry) on this subject and urge him to support the Scottish case. I hope that the

[Mr. Andrew Welsh]

Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, who is sitting beside him, will be urging such a course on the Government.

If we are properly to tackle environmental protection, we require a European body that is involved fully in research, action that is based on that research and conservation that is based on a dynamic interaction with the environment. That requires a comprehensive approach that links urban and rural needs and utilises interdisciplinary scientific skills. If properly instituted environmental protection measures can create employment, it is not necessarily a negative activity. Indeed, it should not be that. The real task is to safeguard the rights of future generations. That is basically what the debate is about. That is what the agency, and other agencies that are connected with it, should do. "Protect and survive" is a slogan with real meaning in this context.

I wish the new agency well. I hope that it will be allowed to grow equal to the environmental task that it faces. I hope also to hear from the Government that they are committed to allowing the agency to meet that challenge and carry out the task.

11.33 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): The excellent speech of the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) perhaps summarised what the debate is about. As a Scottish Member, he wisely urged us to ensure that the European agency is located in Scotland. He argued that there should be a Scottish agency as well, which would similarly be located in Scotland. There would be lots of jobs, and everyone would be happy.

We have had a debate in which every participant has welcomed the agency. It would be rather sad to send the report of it to Brussels, or wherever it goes, without at least one Member saying that the proposal is a load of rubbish.

It is proposed that we set up yet another useless quango. That is strange when we have a Government who have prided themselves on the abolition of quangos. When we are dealing with the EEC, we seem to delight in the creation of more and more semi-quangos. They have no real powers and they duplicate the work that is already done by half a dozen agencies. My hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) raised an important constituency issue, and one which I would have been extremely worried about. He must know, however, that the agency will not have any powers to do anything about it.

The Opposition say that the Government's environment policies are rubbish, and some of my hon. Friends say that they are not. We all know, however, that the agency will not have any powers to do anything to overcome the problems. It is being suggested that we should have a great new body, which will have conferences, seminars and newspapers. I am sure that there are many of them, in Scotland and in Southend. They will spend a great deal of money and create lots of jobs and the whole thing will be a total waste of time and money.

At a time when the average family in Britain is paying £3 a week as a net contribution to the EEC and more than £13 extra for food simply because of the EEC, we should have a Conservative Government who question whether there is any point in these foolish quangos being established as they are established in Europe.

As the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) will be aware, we have made constitutional progress too. So far as I am aware, for the first time the European Parliament will be nominating two members to the new body, and the Government are required to appoint a representative who will be in a co-operative frame of mind as regards co-operation between the agency and member states. Apart from the fact that I am unlikely to be considered for that, I think that it is quite outrageous for Euro-legislation to require states to appoint people with particular points of view and particular attitudes. Yet it is here, in article 6.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does not the hon. Gentleman admit that the Government appoint people with particular points of view to boards?

Mr. Taylor: The Government are entitled to do what they want within the law because they are a democratically elected Government. That is what democracy is all about. But we do not have a law requiring them to appoint people of a particular character. That seems to be a rather strange new initiative, but we shall probably see a lot more of it.

We are all delighted to see my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State on the Front Bench, because his honesty and integrity would be a credit to any Government of any party. First, will he tell us what the cost will be? The CORINE programme was set up in 1985. We were told it was to be a closely safeguarded organisation which would spend only a limited amount of money. That money was £3 million. We know that it has already spent £4 million and now it appears that it is trying to spend £8 million.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: Does it fit the hon. Gentleman's conspiracy theory that the only mention of money in the document is tucked away at the back and in French?

Mr. Taylor: The hon. Gentleman will find it in English as well, if he turns to page 16, but that is irrelevant.

Secondly, can my hon. Friend the Minister tell me how duplication will be stopped. The Select Committee did a splendid job saying that it is a shame to have lots of organisations doing the same thing, but the Minister must know that no organisation will stop what it is doing. The OECD will not stop doing what it is doing so splendidly; the United Nations environmental centre will not stop its excellent work, nor will the joint research centre. There will be yet another body holding more conferences and collecting more information.

Thirdly, what on earth is the point of establishing a harmless body to do work which is already being done by several organisations? It is a body without any powers. As the Minister said, it will have no right to tell Britain, Greece, Portugal, Sweden or France or any country within or outwith the EEC what to do. That seems quite crazy.

Finally, the agency is meant to advise us on European environmental policy. That is the height of hypocrisy. We know that European environmental policy consists of being very tough on any individual or organisation that creates pollution except farmers. Although we know that agriculture is one of the greatest polluters in Europe, farmers seem to be totally exempt from restrictions and penalties. In regard to nitrates, for example, although the

Single European Act states clearly that the polluter should pay, the Government are about to produce legislation to offer compensation to the agricultural bodies for not creating so much pollution.

Although everyone will be happy to see the Common Market creating another body that will not cause too much trouble but will cost much money, we should occasionally think about ratepayers in places such as Southend, whose water rates are being increased substantially—*[Interruption.]* Opposition Members should not laugh, because poor and simple people, some rich and wise people and ordinary people will have to pay much more this year to sort out the serious problem of pollution, which is created solely by the activities of agriculture and the EEC.

We should tear up this document and scrap this proposal, because the Government must be well aware that no good will come from the EEC, except for the organisers of conferences, hotel owners and the publishers of newspapers. We all know that it is a silly, worthless proposal, which is why it is daft for hon. Members to say that the best solution is for the agency to be located in Scotland, or anywhere else in the United Kingdom.

11.45 pm

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: This has been a brief debate, but hon. Members have expressed a range of opinions. I shall try to answer most of the questions asked.

I listened in vain to the hon. Member for Bootle (*Mr. Roberts*) to hear anything of relevance to the three items under consideration. It was interesting to hear the hon. Gentleman say that he wants an interventionist agency that could compel witnesses and demand information from British organisations, presumably under threat of penalty. I know that the labour party has done a U-turn on Europe and that it wants enthusiastically to display its European credentials, but until this evening I did not know that that entailed a major extension of Commission powers. I hope that the hon. Gentleman cleared his speech with his shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, who I regret is not present this evening.

Mr. Allan Roberts: I did not suggest massive extension of Commission powers. There is no point in having a European agency—we believe that the Scandinavian countries and others should be involved—if it does not have the power to require evidence or to obtain the information necessary for it to do its job. If it is a voluntary agency, it will not work. Either it should not be set up or it should be given the powers necessary for it to be effective.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: We heard the hon. Gentleman say that the new agency should be able to compel the Government and British organisations to supply data. If it is to be able to compel the supply of information, it must be able to apply sanctions and penalties if that information is not forthcoming. I should like to hear what penalties the hon. Gentleman has in mind, because that would represent a major extension of Commission competence into the workings of British Government and organisations. I hope that that fits in with the new environmentally friendly policy review recently published by the Labour party. I further hope that the shadow Secretary of State for the Environment will not be surprised when he reads the hon. Gentleman's remarks in the *Official Report* tomorrow.

I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, West (*Mr. Jones*) for introducing into the debate the report of the Select Committee on the Environment. I was pleased to have the general support of the Committee, in particular for resisting an enforcement role for the proposed agency. I listened carefully to his other remarks on the role of non-governmental organisations, which will be taken into account in the negotiations and discussions in Brussels that must be undertaken before the regulation is put into its final form.

I listened, too, to what my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, West said about non-member states. Recent developments in eastern Europe might be relevant. We could be moving towards an eventual wider association of nation states in Europe. It is therefore particularly important that we welcome observer status for these countries. That is specifically included in the draft regulation. The proposal has the general support of not only the Government but other Community members.

We have already received bids for the agency's location from centres of excellence in various parts of the United Kingdom. It is far too early to distinguish between them or to put forward the claims of one above another. The bids show the range and depth of excellence in scientific research on environmental matters that already exist in the United Kingdom. This should strengthen Britain's bid to have the agency located here.

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (*Sir R. Johnston*) rightly welcomed the need for comparable data. I reject his illiberal suggestion that the agency should have coercive or enforcement powers. In this, the hon. Gentleman appeared to agree with the Labour party. We do not see the need for compulsion either in theory or in practice. The new agency will draw on existing data, and to the extent that data do not exist, it is up to the agency to negotiate contracts to assemble and assess information.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the hon. Gentleman believe that criminals should volunteer information about their crimes to the police?

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The British Government have a record of making publicly available a huge range of data about the environment. We have nothing to hide. We have recently proposed a further extension of data that will be available under statute for public inspection. All this will be available to the proposed agency.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) again spoke about rain forests. We had an interesting debate on that subject on Friday and I respect the hon. Gentleman's continuing interest. He particularly asked about satellite monitoring. I shall ask my officials to ascertain the extent to which the agency will be able to draw on existing satellite monitoring techniques. Rain forests are a little wide of the agency's remit as presently envisaged, but everyone who is interested in the environment—the agency, Community organisations, national Governments and the public—has everything to gain by drawing together existing scientific knowledge.

We have a particularly good record in assisting tropical rain forest countries to manage their forests responsibly. We know that it is usually a matter of replanting rather than burning. The harvesting of hardwoods is not in itself environmentally destructive. It all comes down to the point, as underlined by my right hon. Friend the Prime

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Minister in her speech to the United Nations, that many of these countries require technology and financial help. We are actively pursuing that course.

Much remains to be done to understand the algal infestation this summer in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham). I cannot give him a definitive answer, but I shall ask my officials to look into the points that he made. It concerns the agency in that it would obviously help if we could draw together the existing scientific knowledge on the subject, and I hope that that will help to prevent a recurrence of the unfortunate events of last summer.

The hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) mentioned bids from Scotland for the location of the agency. I know that Edinburgh university is interested. I can say no more at present on that subject, except that it underscores the strength that Britain can bring to bear in our bid to have the agency located somewhere in the United Kingdom.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) referred to the agency as a quango. It is not a quango and we are not setting it up. It is being established under treaty powers granted to the Commission by this House. The Commission has powers and responsibilities for the environment, given to it under the Single European Act. My hon. Friend voted against that measure, but it was passed by Parliament and he will agree that as such powers exist, it is better that they should be deployed on the firmest possible scientific base. As he said, it will not be an enforcement agency, but it will draw together what we already know about the environment so that actions taken, not only by the European Commission but by national Governments, are underpinned by the most up-to-date range of scientific information.

I stress that the setting up of the agency will help to ensure that the quality of environmental information generally available to member countries and the Commission is raised. The United Kingdom has much to offer in this respect from its long-established and experienced institutions.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Documents Nos. 8030/89 on a European Environment Agency and a European Environment Monitoring and Information Network and the Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum submitted by the Department of the Environment on 19th October 1989 and 9785/86 on the Fourth Environmental Action Programme (1987-1992); supports the Government's view that the proposal for a European Environment Agency and a European Environment Monitoring and Information Network provides the most appropriate means of enhancing a sound data base to inform and support Community environmental policy; and approves in general the guidelines for the Community's Fourth Environmental Action Programme.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Statutory Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

Solvency (Northern Ireland)

That the draft Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 17th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

Companies (Northern Ireland)

That the draft Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 17th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Question agreed to.

Haemophiliacs (AIDS)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Before I call the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack), I should draw the attention of the House to the fact that a case affecting haemophiliac AIDS victims is currently before the courts. Mr. Speaker has exercised the discretion given to him in relation to court cases which are sub judice in permiting this debate to go ahead, but I trust that hon. Members will seek to avoid as far as possible direct reference to the issues specifically before the courts.

11.52 pm

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): I am grateful to Mr. Speaker for exercising his discretion in that way and for allowing us to debate a matter which is of great importance, as illustrated by the fact that there are present tonight so many of my hon. Friends—I use the expression advisedly—in all parts of the House. I am also grateful for the fact that two Ministers from the Department of Health are present.

The words "special case" are probably more overworked than any others in the political vocabulary, but tonight we are considering a group who really merit that description. Their numbers are known, their problems are tragic, and Government have a real moral responsibility for those problems. Although nobody has the means of solving them, Government can remove the financial anxiety which adds immeasurably to the acute and continuing stress of dread illness that their agent, albeit unwittingly, created.

There are 5,000 haemophiliacs in this country; 1,200 of them, including 200 children, were infected with the HIV virus before the Health Department officially told doctors, in September 1985, to use only the heat-treated version of the blood clotting agent factor X, which had itself brought new life and hope to haemophiliacs. Of those 1,200, 163 developed full-blown AIDS, and 107 of them have already died.

So we are dealing with a well-defined and inevitably sadly diminishing group of people. There will be no more victims, save perhaps for a few infected babies yet to be born. There will be no more victims because supplies of factor 8 are now safe. However, for these 1,200 that is small consolation because their supplies were not. Those supplies were obtained and administered through the National Health Service. No one can give back to these victims the hope of a normal life that was once theirs. No once can remove the uncertainty with which they and their families live from day to day—the uncertainty of when the bell will toll. If any group of people live in the shadow of death, they do. It is no wonder that their story has been described as the most tragic in the history of the NHS. Many of them carry the extra burden of financial hardship, or the even greater worry of not knowing how their dependants will fare after they have gone.

Many heart-rending cases have been brought to my attention. I received a letter today stating:

"We have been married for 24 years and watched the treatment improve from plasma to factor 8. It led us to believe that the life expectancy of a haemophiliac was near normal. Because of this we chose to have a family. We now have three grandchildren. Once we learned of my husband's HIV status, our world was shattered. It has affected all of us very badly. We were never ashamed to tell anyone that he was a haemophiliac. Now we all suffer in silence."

The daughter of a constituent wrote:

"I have watched his treatment improve over the years. Imagine our horror when we were told that he had the AIDS virus."

Another of my constituents simply said:

"Money is nothing compared to human life but it can give a family the ability to choose how their life should go forward. Families may feel that they need to move house if hostility has been experienced in their neighbourhood. Many haemophiliacs have cars through the motability scheme—how can a family cope with suddenly being without transport? A family which has been living on State Benefit needs financial support when the husband or father is very ill and certainly when he dies. The hardest part to accept is that this should never have happened."

Hon. Members will have seen innumerable letters like that, many of which have been circulated by the Haemophilia Society. No one who has studied this sad saga can accuse the Government of callousness or indifference. Two years ago, partly due to pressure from hon. Members on both sides of the House, the Secretary of State for Social Services announced at the Dispatch Box that £10 million was to be placed in a trust fund to help haemophiliac AIDS victims. That gesture was appreciated and many families have cause to be grateful. But, the Macfarlane Trust was not intended to provide compensation. It is a welfare fund to deal with specific needs at particular times. What these people need is proper recognition that they are the victims of the most ghastly and far-reaching of accidents.

The victims of accidents frequently sue those whom they hold responsible, but just as frequently the moral responsibility is accepted and an out-of-court settlement is made. That is not the same as saying that culpability is accepted. Those who suffered as a result of the Piper Alpha explosion, the Clapham train crash, or more recently, the sinking of the Marchioness just down the Thames from here benefited or are likely to benefit from out-of-court settlements. The Government should act in like manner towards these haemophiliac victims. Six hundred people have already begun court action, but the courts take time, and time is what they do not have. Moreover, some people have not even been able to begin proceedings because they do not qualify for legal aid and cannot contemplate a lengthy, costly struggle.

The problem is not unique to Britain. In other countries in which the circumstances of infection have been very similar, Governments have accepted their moral responsibility and agreed to compensate. In Canada, where there are 950 victims, the Government have opened an extraordinary assistance programme, as they call it, under which compensation is to be paid in the same manner as it is paid to victims of natural disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. There are compensation schemes in operation in Germany, Denmark, Norway and France. In some countries, such as New Zealand, there are already fully developed no-fault compensation schemes from which all victims of medical mishap can benefit.

If the Government opt for an out-of-court settlement, they need not admit culpability. If the matter is dragged through the courts, it could mean sad consequences for haemophiliacs who are not infected. Although commercial pharmaceutical companies are not involved in any pending High Court case, plaintiffs and defendants have

[Mr. Patrick Cormack]

reserved the right to call them to give evidence. It is not impossible that that could have the effect of stopping or slowing the supply of perfectly safe factor 8.

No one has suggested that these tragic victims do not have a case. No one disputes how they were infected. No one suggests that they were in any way, as a result of personal carelessness or lifestyle, responsible for the cruel predicament in which they find themselves. Everyone expresses sympathy, but only the Minister can effectively translate that sympathy into action—and not merely by adding more money to a trust fund administering means-tested benefits. Two years ago, the Government said that compensation could not be awarded other than by the courts. The Government now say that they cannot make an out-of-court settlement because the matter is before the courts. That simply will not do.

I often remember the lovely story about the artist painting the model. When the lady says, "I hope that you will do me justice," the artist replies "Madam, it is not justice you need—it is mercy." I am not asking for charity. I am not even demanding justice. I am asking the Government to accept their moral responsibility and to show mercy to a group of people who, more than any other single group I can think of, manifestly deserve it. I hope that we shall have a full and good answer from the Minister, but whatever he says, unless he agrees to our request, the campaign will go on and we shall not go away. *The Sunday Times* will continue its thundering, and we shall continue our thundering.

I am glad to see so many of my hon. Friends present on both sides of the House. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), who has done a great deal in this matter. We shall fight until we win the battle, but I hope that, as there are so many other battles to fight, we shall not need to wage this one any further after today. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will give us the answer that we believe that he should.

12.2 am

Mr. Alfred Morris (Manchester, Wythenshawe): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) for leaving time after that distinguished speech for me to make it clear that his very genuine concern is widely shared on both sides of both Houses of Parliament. In my role as an Opposition Front Bench Member specialising in this field, I have had deeply moving correspondence from people with haemophilia and HIV in all parts of Britain. It is a dossier of despair, from which I have time to quote only from the letter of a constituent of mine, who writes:

"While the MacFarlane Trust has been of help, a long-term solution it is not. It is wrong for us to have to depend on welfare handouts when the disease was contracted by no fault of our own.

An out-of-court settlement should be made promptly, so that I and my fellow sufferers can enjoy some sort of reasonable lifestyle before we die."

The case for an out-of-court settlement is overwhelming. Many of the victims of this huge disaster in health care have already died. Many more know that they have little prospect of living to see a settlement in court, and they rightly insist that posthumous justice is no justice at all. Their case is self-evidently unique and in my view deserves the unique response that it has received in other countries. Opposition Members want to see a no-fault compensation scheme and we urge the Government to recognise that the plight of people with haemophilia and HIV argues unanswerably the need for such a scheme.

Another Thalidomide-style tragedy can and must be prevented. In that case, after years of campaigning, Distiller's finally accepted that an out-of-court settlement was unavoidable. Why cannot the Government accept that the victims of this disaster are just as deserving? They have been dealt the cruellest possible hand. They have to live not only in a genetic disorder, but with HIV as well. They are doubly stricken and in double despair as they await the outcome of this most urgent all-party plea on their behalf.

12.4 am

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) on raising this case of the most tragic human misery of these haemophiliac victims.

I rise to speak because three of my constituents are haemophiliacs and HIV-positive as a result of using the blood product, factor 8, provided by the NHS for home treatment, and because their plight points up the weaknesses of the present compensation system, whereby negligence is the sole reason for offering compensation to victims of medical accidents, and then only after a long-drawn-out and costly process. As my hon. Friend has said, in these cases, time is the one substance in the shortest supply.

Over the weekend I met one of the haemophiliacs, a young man, with his wife and family. He told me of the psychological change that had come over him since 1985, when he was first advised he had the virus. He described how originally he was told that he had a one in 400 chance of contracting AIDS but subsequently has learned his chances are one in two, with a 75 per cent. chance of mortality in seven to 10 years. He is a man who will probably never know the joy of seeing his children grow up, for whom the future holds nothing, whose job promotion prospects are nil.

He is grateful for the £1,200 a year he gets from the Macfarlane Trust. It helps to pay for the extras he needs, but his worry is about his family, and who will pay for the mortgage if he is no longer able to work, or is no longer with them. He can make no provision for his family. He is precluded from taking out a life insurance policy because of the virus. In other words, if the worst happens, he fears for his home and for his wife and children—yet there is nothing he can do to help them.

He suggested that, if the Government would underwrite a life insurance scheme, he would happily pay the premiums. It was a generous suggestion, and it would be better than nothing. But in conscience can any of us really accept that this young haemophiliac, and the others like him, who were supplied by the NHS with what they believed was a tested, pure, life-saving product only to find it contaminated with a deadly virus, should be expected to manage on means-tested Macfarlane handouts, or be asked to wait for the result of litigation, which is at least 18 months away and may go against them? And if it does, what then? Do we walk away from them, and leave them with their tragedy?

The quality of their lives has been irreparably damaged—no-one denies that. They live with the ever-present fear of AIDS, knowing that over 100 have already died. Whatever compensation may be paid cannot restore what

they have lost, but at least we can ease their worries for their families if anything happens to them; and we can do that by setting up a compensation fund for their families now, and with it, the promise of payments for those already in need or who have contracted AIDS. That is my urgent request to the Government tonight, and I make it on both moral and humanitarian grounds.

12.8 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Roger Freeman): My hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) has certainly done a great service to the House by raising the plight of some 1,200 haemophiliacs who have become infected with the AIDS virus as a result of treatment with infected blood products. My hon. Friend the Minister for Health, whose responsibility this subject is, has only just returned from Brussels. She particularly wanted to join the debate, because she shares with me and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health a great concern about the plight of these haemophiliacs.

My hon. Friend has described a most moving story to the House. The record should show that, in addition to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Sir M McNair-Wilson) and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) also in the Chamber at this late hour are my predecessor, my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) my hon. Friends the Members for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham), for Salisbury (Mr. Key) who has made representations directly to my hon. Friend the Minister for Health, for Suffolk, Central (Mr. Lord) who has questioned the Prime Minister on this subject, for Meriden (Mr. Mills) and for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs), and the hon. Members for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) and for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson). The level of attendance at this late hour is a sign of how seriously hon. Members take this subject.

All hon. Members would like to express their sympathy for those who are infected and for their families. It is particularly tragic that the coagulation products that were intended to revolutionise their lives have caused so much suffering. I appreciate the tremendous mental stresses under which those affected are living. I know that the six haemophilia reference centres provide specialist counselling. The Department provides financial support for those services, and since April 1985 we have provided nearly £1 million.

I am also conscious that the personal health problems for haemophiliacs with HIV may, in some cases, be compounded by the reactions of other people around them. The fear of AIDS has all too often led otherwise humane and sensitive people to prejudice and discrimination, which is completely unjustified. There is no scientific or ethical justification for discriminating against people who have the AIDS virus.

Clearly, too, there are financial worries for those who are infected with HIV. It is understandable that they should wish to live with dignity and make adequate provision for their families. Let me stress that the Government have already acted by setting up the Macfarlane Trust, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) has referred. It is named after an eminent haematologist. We set up that trust with an initial £10 million. When that ex gratia payment was announced to the House in November 1987, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security, then Minister of Health, said that we had recognised the very special circumstances of the haemophiliacs with the AIDS virus.

The Haemophilia Society had put to us a powerful case that the position of haemophiliacs was wholly exceptional and should be treated as such. Their employment prospects and insurance status were already affected by the haemophilia itself. The treatment that led to their infection was designed to help them live as near normal lives as possible. The hereditary nature of haemophilia can, and sometimes does, mean that more than one member of the same family may be affected. Providing the grant to set up the trust was a wholly exceptional measure which recognised those special circumstances.

Some commentators have been critical of what they see as the "means-tested" nature of the Macfarlane Trust—two of my hon. Friends referred to that. It is true that the trust deed limits the use of the fund to cases of "need", but positive criteria are not laid down and it is a matter for the trustees to allocate funds in the way which they consider best meets the needs of those who are eligible for help under the terms of the deed. I believe that the trustees carry out this task conscientiously and with sensitivity. They have been able to help a large number of people and make single payments for a wide variety of purposes arising from reasons of physical health and mental stress, including help with travel, accommodation and employment.

Regular payments help with the extra cost of living with HIV. In the period up to 31 October 1989, the trust has made over 1,800 single payments totalling nearly £1 million and implemented regular payments in more than 600 cases at a cost of nearly £1·2 million. Some have expressed fears that the £10 million may run out. We made it clear when we announced the £10 million grant that our mind would not be closed to representations that might be made at a later stage in relation to the amount available.

I would also remind hon. Members that the Government have made regulations to ensure that payments from the trust do not reduce any entitlement to income support, family credit and housing benefit.

Let me stress that the grant provided to the trust was not, and is not intended as, "compensation." The position in this country under successive Governments has been that there is no state scheme of no-fault compensation for those injured by medical treatment.

The case for alternative means of compensating victims of medical accidents was carefully investigated by the Royal Commission on civil liability and personal injury, which reported in 1978. It came down against introducing a system of no-fault compensation. The arguments for and against have not fundamentally changed. No-fault compensation may overcome the perceived unfairness of treatment between those victims of medical accidents who are awarded damages after proving negligence and those who are not compensated because either they fail to prove negligence or because negligence was clearly not involved. However, such a scheme would, in its turn, create unfairness between those who are disabled by a medical accident, who would then be compensated, and those who are equally disabled as a result of the natural progression of their disease who would not normally fall to be compensated under a no-fault scheme.

I want to refer briefly to the court action but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall be mindful of your ruling on the

[Mr. Roger Freeman]

matter. Some 600 haemophiliacs with the AIDS virus are pursuing compensation through the courts. The Department of Health, the Medicines Licensing Authority, which comprises the United Kingdom Health Ministers, and the Committee on Safety of Medicines, which gives advice to the licensing authority, are among the defendants. The legal advice which I have received is that it would be wrong of me to make any comments today which might prejudice the conduct or outcome of the case. Various allegations of negligence are made which we deny categorically. I am sure that the House will understand that I am unable at present to comment in more detail on these matters, as they are sub judice.

I should like to repeat the Government's sympathy for the plight of the haemophiliacs with HIV and their dependants. We have already expressed that in a tangible way with the £10 million ex gratia payment for the Macfarlane Trust. I should like to remind the House of what was said by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security when he was the Minister for Health. When announcing the grant, he said that our mind would not be closed to representations that might be made at a later stage.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Is this a question of precedent and the feeling of the Department's legal advisers that the Department might let itself in for many other payments if it were not to defend itself on this, or is it seen as a one-off problem?

Mr. Freeman: We believe strongly that there was no negligence on the part of the Department of Health. You, Mr. Speaker, have said that it would be wrong to go into the merits of the case before the courts. However, we categorically deny any negligence. An entirely separate issue—it has been put by my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack)—is the consideration of the plight of those who have suffered this appalling affliction.

Mr. Alfred Morris: Is not the governing factor here that many of the victims cannot expect to live to see a settlement in court, and that posthumous justice is not justice? Is not that the special case that the Government need in order to concede the argument that the Minister has heard tonight from both sides of the House?

Mr. Freeman: The right hon. Gentleman has made a very telling point, which was also made by my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South. Many of the victims have a short life expectancy and the matter is one of some urgency. We are seized of the significance of that argument.

I repeat the commitment given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security when he was Minister for Health, which is that our minds are not closed to representations that might be made about the adequacy of the sums provided.

Mr. Cormack: Can the hon. Members who are in the Chamber now come to see my hon. Friends the Under-Secretary of State and the Minister for Health to discuss the matter in detail?

Mr. Freeman: I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister for Health, who is responsible for these matters, will be pleased to see my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South and any or all the right hon. and hon. Members present. I will undertake to draw the record of this debate to the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and officials in the Department——

Mr. Cormack: And our right hon. Friend the Prime Minister?

Mr. Freeman: I would be delighted to convey to No. 10 Downing street a copy of the *Official Report*. We shall study with great care this important debate. It has been a matter of great concern and emotion for all of us—I speak not only for myself, but my ministerial colleagues. I can assure my hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South that the matter will not rest with tonight's debate. We look forward to further discussions.

12.19 am

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I believe that the Minister feels strongly about this issue, and his reply was totally sincere. However, a long time ago I was Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department of Health and I wonder whether Ministers might be unduly influenced by the lawyers' difficulties and the matter to which I have referred—setting a precedent. Is there not an argument for saying that this is a one-off situation and there is an element of culpability, which the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South explained very well?

In these unique circumstances, the Government should not feel bound by the terrible shroud of legal precedent. This is something different, and all of us with experience of these matters know that these are not run-of-the-mill cases, but a one-off situation. Am I being told that this is not a one-off situation?

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 14 November 1989

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

ISLE OF WIGHT BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [9 November],

That this House doth agree with the Lords in their Amendment to the Preamble, page 1, line 4, at the end, to insert the words—

"(2) By the Isle of Wight Act 1980 it was provided that the said section 5 should continue to have effect notwithstanding the provisions of section 262 of the Local Government Act 1972:"—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Debate further adjourned till Monday 20 November.

ST. GEORGE'S HILL, WEYBRIDGE, ESTATE BILL *(By Order)*

HYTHE MARINA VILLAGE (SOUTHAMPTON) WAVESCREEN BILL *(By Order)*

NEW SOUTHGATE CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM LIMITED BILL *(By Order)*

CITY OF LONDON (SPITALFIELDS MARKET) BILL *(By Order)*

Orders read for consideration of Lords amendments.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (PENALTY FARES) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

As amended, further considered.

Amendments agreed to,

To be read the Third time.

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT (PENALTY FARES) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL *(By Order)*

BROMLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL (CRYSTAL PALACE) BILL *(By Order)*

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

SOUTH YORKSHIRE LIGHT TRANSIT BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

LONDON LOCAL AUTHORITIES BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

UNITED MEDICAL AND DENTAL SCHOOLS BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Orders for consideration, as amended, read.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

Order for Second Reading read.

To be read a Second time on Monday 20 November.

PRIVATE BILLS *[Lords]* SUSPENSION

Motion made,

That so much of the Lords Messages [2nd November, 7th November and 8th November] as relates to the River Tees Barrage and Crossing Bill *[Lords]*, the Happisburgh Lighthouse Bill *[Lords]*, the Great Yarmouth Port Authority Bill *[Lords]*, the Southampton Rapid Transit Bill *[Lords]*, the Heathrow Express Railway Bill *[Lords]*, the London Local Authorities (No. 2) Bill *[Lords]* and the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) Bill *[Lords]* be now considered.

That this House doth concur with the Lords in their Resolution.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Wednesday 15 November.

PENZANCE ALBERT PIER EXTENSION BILL

Motion made,

That so much of the Lords Message [2nd November] as relates to the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill be now considered.

That the Promoters of the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first, second and third time and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Wednesday 15 November.

NOTTINGHAM PARK ESTATE BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Nottingham Park Estate Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office no later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That, if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That, as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be read the first and second time and committed (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read and committed);

That the Petitions relating to the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

VALE OF GLAMORGAN (BARRY HARBOUR) BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Vale of Glamorgan (Barry Harbour) Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first and shall be ordered to be read a second time;

That the Petitions against the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

MEDWAY TUNNEL BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Medway Tunnel Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration, signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first and shall be ordered to be read a second time;

That the Petitions against the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

GREATER MANCHESTER (LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM) (NO. 3) BILL *[Lords]*

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) (No. 3) Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration, signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration had been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first time and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills;

That, no petitions against the Bill having been presented within the time limited within the present Session, no Petitioners shall be heard before any committee on the Bill save those who complain of any amendment as proposed in the filled up Bill or of any matter which arises during the progress of the Bill before the committee;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE SOUTHBANK BILL

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the British Film Institute Southbank Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

British Railways Bill

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the British Railways Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceeding and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

City of London (Various Powers) Bill

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the City of London (Various Powers) Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

Redbridge London Borough Council Bill

Motion made,

That the Promoters of the Redbridge London Borough Council Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office not later than the day before the close of the present Session of their intention to suspend further proceedings and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first and second time (and shall be recorded in the Journal of the House as having been so read) and, having been amended by the Committee in the present Session, shall be ordered to lie upon the Table;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

Oral Answers to Questions

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Student Loans

1. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Eduation and Science if he has any meeting arranged with Scottish university principals to discuss the effect of student loans on Scottish four-year degree courses.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): No, Sir. The choice to undertake a course involving four years of study, in Scotland or elsewhere, necessarily involves a mix of economic and educational considerations. I do not expect the provision of additional support in the form of a loan to affect students' approach to that decision.

Mr. Salmond: The Minister must be aware that figures from within the Government's White Paper show that the cost to students in terms of the outstanding debt in opting for a four-year course, with current rates of inflation, will be 60 per cent. greater than for students taking a three-year course. Does that not represent a substantial disincentive to entering a four-year honours degree in Scotland? Does it not mean that the scheme is a fundamental attack on Scottish education itself?

Mr. Jackson: There must be something wrong with the hon. Gentleman's arithmetic. If he were to study under the national curriculum, perhaps it would be improved. Courses of all lengths are available in higher education in England, Scotland, Wales and around the world in countries where there are student loan schemes. Other countries have not found it necessary to introduce differential arrangements for different sorts of students. We have said that we are prepared to consider extending the repayment period in relation to the size of the borrowing. That sort of arrangement is common where student loans exist.

Mr. Colvin: Will my hon. Friend confirm that the major commercial banks have now agreed to join the student loan scheme and that he is not having second thoughts about removing students from the welfare system?

Mr. Jackson: I can reassure my hon. Friend on the second point: we are not having second thoughts about it. On the first point, a question later on the Order Paper will be answered by my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Ernie Ross: The Minister fails to understand the significance of this for students who attend universities in Scotland. They include not only Scottish students, but a number of English, Welsh and Irish students, too. The four-year course in Scotland is much easier for students and produces much more academically qualified graduates. The extension of the loan period will in no way encourage students to come to Scotland or the students in Scotland to take up further education.

The Minister must look into this again—it is impinging on Scottish universities.

Mr. Jackson: Scottish degree courses last for four years instead of three because of the difference between Scottish Highers and A-levels. One quarter of all students in Scottish universities come with A-levels from England and Wales and are attracted to Scotland by the quality of education offered there. I believe that they will continue to be so attracted, the introduction of student loans notwithstanding.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree that several hon. Members, including my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, demonstrate the worth of the four-year Scottish degree? Does he also agree that those who take part in such degree courses earn much higher incomes afterwards than they would otherwise have done, so is it not right that they should pay something back to society for those higher incomes?

Mr. Jackson: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. One curiosity of the arguments that we sometimes hear against student loans is that they are premised on an assumption that the value of higher education to the people who go through it is so low that any element of repayment will deter them. That implies that higher education is of zero value to those who benefit from it, and that I cannot believe.

City Technology Colleges

2. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for the expansion of the city technology college programme; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. John MacGregor): Three CTCs are up and running and firm starting dates in 1990 and 1991 have been announced for a further eight colleges. We shall continue to build, with sponsors, on this excellent foundation.

Mr. Skinner: It is to be hoped that the Government will build in a better fashion than they have so far. When the previous Secretary of State announced—[HON. MEMBERS: "Question."]—the city technology colleges, is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he said that all or most of the money would come from private funds? Yet of the £19·3 million—[HON. MEMBERS: "Question."]—I have asked a question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman asked, "Is the Minister aware?"

Mr. Skinner: To satisfy the House, I will say it again. Is the Minister aware that of the £19·3 million that has been spent, £16 million has come from public funds? If the Government have that sort of money to throw around, why not spend it on Bolsover schools and make sure that the little infant school in South Normanton has running water laid on for the toddlers? That is what they should do with the money.

Mr. MacGregor: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would have concluded that the more than £40 million already raised from sponsors—[HON. MEMBERS: "Raised?"]—already raised and pledged by sponsors for this exciting innovation—was a considerable achievement in a short space of time. He should be grateful to the sponsors who are adding to the Government funding for this exciting new scheme. It has many advantages of innovation, for inner-city areas and of improving the technology curricula. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would regard that as a success.

Mr. Pawsey: Is my right hon. Friend aware that I, too, am concerned about the expansion of city technology colleges, although perhaps not in the same way as the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)? My concern is that there are not enough of them and that they are not coming on stream quickly enough—

Hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The rules apply to both sides.

Mr. Pawsey: Is my right hon. Friend aware that we should do more to speed up the building and introduction of these schools? What measures will he take to ensure that we produce more than 20 CTCs in the least possible time?

Mr. MacGregor: Twenty remains the target and the pace at which it is realistic and practical to move must be taken into account. Nevertheless, I should have thought that getting three schools up and running within three years, and the gathering of more than £40 million of private sponsorship, represents a considerable achievement.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Given that Tory-controlled county councils are protesting vehemently at having to enforce cuts in their education budgets in the coming year and given the massive demand for expenditure on teachers' salaries to restore the morale of the profession, will the Secretary of State confirm that there will be no announcement tomorrow of increased capital funding of CTCs? Since the original plan is a failure, with the Government having to put up 80 per cent. rather than 20 per cent. of the money, may we have a stop to this separatist and elitist expenditure at the expense of the country's general education?

Mr. MacGregor: I cannot announce in advance what will be said tomorrow. The hon. Gentleman cannot say that the scheme is a failure given that, for example, Kingshurst CTC had more than 1,200 applications for 180 places, Nottingham had more than 300 applications for 180 places and Sylvan has already had more than 480 aplications for 180 places. All that shows a clear demand from parents for those schools, which cannot be regarded as a failure. The hon. Gentleman will know that we have increased the revenue support grants and spending assessments by a considerable sum compared with their equivalents last year, so there has been a considerable increase in local authorities' current spending on education in general.

Mr. Dunn: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the CTC concept is so good, attractive and necessary that all hon. Members should be taking steps to have one set up in their communities? Will my right hon. Friend confirm that there is nothing to stop local education authorities setting up CTC-style schools if they wish to do so?

Mr. MacGregor: Some local education authorities are putting forward interesting ideas and I shall encourage them to continue to explore that thought. I should like more sponsors to come forward, but it is remarkable that we have already achieved more than £40 million. But the more sponsors that we have, the better pleased I shall be.

Mr. Fatchett: Is it not true that the CTC scheme has failed to attract private sponsorship and that that is why only £3 million of private money has been invested? Why did the Minister of State have to write to the Conservative leader of Lincolnshire county council on 14 September saying that the Government and the CTC trust were unable to attract private sector support for a CTC in Lincoln? Is that a sign of the attractiveness and success of the scheme, or is it just a sign of the Government's further failure to attract private funding?

Mr. MacGregor: I do not see how the pledging of more than £40 million of sponsorship can be regarded as a failure. That is one of the largest examples of giving by the private sector to education for a long time, so I do not know how it can be regarded as a failure. With regard to Lincoln, one of the relevant points is that CTCs are meant to be directed at inner-city areas, and that is where we have been concentrating.

4. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received regarding the proposed establishment of a city technology college in Telford.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): I have received 14 letters following the announcement by the Mercers Company of its intention to sponsor a CTC in Telford.

Mr. Gill: Will my hon. Friend take this opportunity to publicise the fact that CTCs are not designed only for academically gifted children, and that children hoping to take A-level courses and go on to polytechnics or universities would do best to continue attending existing secondary schools? There will thus be no creaming-off from those schools.

Will my hon. Friend also take this opportunity to assure the House that further consultation will take place before the catchment area for the CTC in Telford is drawn up?

Mrs. Rumbold: As was clearly announced, the CTC initiative has always been intended to cover children of all abilities, directing its efforts particularly towards children who may need more technological education. We hope that A-level courses will feature as much as any other course. I assure my hon. Friend that we are considering catchment areas wider than those applying to ordinary local comprehensives.

Mr. Grocott: Is the Minister aware that I have received numerous representations concerning the proposed Telford CTC? I have them all here—the Minister is welcome to read them—and they are all against the proposal.

Is the Minister further aware that those objections have come not only from parents, teachers, pupils and school governors, but from churches, parish and district councils —Conservative and Labour—and the county council? Is it not time that she accepted the overwhelming evidence that the scheme would cause major disruption to the secondary school system which less than two years ago was approved by the Secretary of State's predecessor, and is it not time that it was scrapped?

Mrs. Rumbold: No, Sir. I understand that the sponsor, the Mercers Company, is looking carefully at all the responses that it has received from the local population —including the local education authority, head teachers and others—and that those responses will eventually be recorded and taken fully into account.

School Transport

5. **Mr. French:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to review the regulations on payment of the costs of school transport.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Alan Howarth): My right hon. Friend has no such plans.

Mr. French: Is my hon. Friend aware that the discretion to pay or not to pay the costs of a pupil's transport to and from a secondary school is being manipulated by some local authorities to inhibit parents' free choice of school? Will he ensure that that practice ceases, and will he say in particular what steps he will take to prevent it from interfering with the success of the policy of open enrolment?

Mr. Howarth: I am not aware of any examples of such deliberate manipulation by local education authorities, but if my hon. Friend can give me written evidence I shall take it very seriously and look into the matter. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State attaches great importance to parental freedom of choice, and looks to local education authorities to do all that they reasonably can to facilitate such choice.

Mr. Madel: Does my hon. Friend agree that it should be perfectly all right for any empty places on school buses to be filled by pupils from grant-maintained schools? Does he agree that certain local education authorities should stop obstructing grant-maintained schools on school transport matters?

Mr. Howarth: I very much hope that local education authorities will fully support the spirit of extending freedom of parental choice, which is an important part of the Education Reform Act 1988, and that they will act reasonably and generously when they feel able to do so.

History

6. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the teaching of history within the national curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales are awaiting the final report of the national curriculum history working group, which they expect to receive by the end of the year. They will then publish their proposals for the history curriculum.

Mr. Marshall: Is my hon. Friend aware that the interim report of the working group was greeted with shock and dismay by the many who believe that the causes and history of the second world war should be part of the national curriculum? After all, 1940 was our finest hour; why is it too fine for the history mandarins?

Mrs. Rumbold: I can assure my hon. Friend that the proposals of the interim working group have been looked at again by the history working group, and that the final proposals will contain full programmes of study on all the units, so that such matters can be taken fully into account.

Mr. Janner: Will the Minister explain her previous answer? Does this mean that the national curriculum will contain the rise and fall of Nazism and the second world war?

Mrs. Rumbold: As I understand it, yes.

Sir John Stokes: Why cannot children be taught about England's heroes instead of vague subjects such as social trends?

Mrs. Rumbold: I have much sympathy with my hon. Friend's question. In our view, the facts of British history —the social, cultural and economic status of our history —are absolutely essential for all children who are studying the subject.

Mr. Straw: Will the Secretary of State ensure that the history syllabus is balanced, or shall we once again see the spectacle of education Ministers being rolled over by the Prime Minister and the advisers in the No. 10 policy unit who wish to turn the history syllabus into no more than a vehicle for the jingoistic, Right-wing indoctrination of our children?

Mrs. Rumbold: It is almost beneath the dignity of the Dispatch Box to answer that question. The history working group is advising my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. The National Curriculum Council will be looking at that advice. When the council has fully consulted on the report of the history working group, my right hon. Friend will take advice from the National Curriculum Council. Balanced history will, of course, be taught in our schools.

Miss Emma Nicholson: Is the Minister aware that the current trend among Caribbean parents to send their children back to the parents' countries of origin for a decent education will no longer be necessary when the national curriculum, including the first-class teaching of genuine history, is in place?

Mrs. Rumbold: I am very much aware of that. That is exactly the purpose of having the national curriculum and of introducing sensible history teaching in our schools.

School Records

7. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what advice he gives to local education authorities about the rights of parents to see the school records of their children.

Mrs. Rumbold: In July my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State laid before the House regulations governing the keeping, disclosure and transfer of schools' manually held records on pupils. At the same time, the Department issued to local education authorities a circular describing the effect of these regulations.

Mr. Lloyd: I am genuinely grateful for the Minister's answer. In the context of the Conservative-controlled Trafford council, whose education committee recently reaffirmed its decision to keep secret and to prevent parents from having access to information relating to 11-plus testing will she confirm that such information will have to be made available under the Department's recently issued guidelines?

Mrs. Rumbold: I cannot add to the answer that the hon. Gentleman received from my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State in his recent reply on that matter. From the date when the new regulation comes into effect, manually held records in schools will be made available to parents. Those records may include the information to which the hon. Gentleman refers.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: Is my hon. Friend aware of the great concern felt by many hon. Members that although initiatives such as pupil profiling, records of achievement and assessment under the national curriculum have improved the quality of the information available to parents on pupils' progress, too often it is inadequately communicated by schools to parents? Will the Government look into the possibility of making written school reports at least twice a year mandatory on all schools, thus improving the relationship between teachers and parents, upon which good education depends?

Mrs. Rumbold: I thank my hon. Friend for his question. The Government are committed to ensuring that sensible records of achievement by children are given to parents. Information should be given not just on their academic achievements but on their other activities in school, including community work and other matters that are of interest in the context of the school curriculum.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Is the Minister aware that Parliament originally gave powers for the regulations to be made nine years ago? It has taken nine years for the regulations to be made and they refer only to information which is compiled after the date of the regulations and not to information about pupils that is already held. Should it not be possible for parents to see information about their children that has been held in the past few years?

Mrs. Rumbold: The circular relates to the future—to 1990—but local education authorities are governed by the Data Protection Act 1984 and much of the information is kept on computer.

Drug Abuse

8. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance is offered by his Department to schools on making special provision for educating children in the dangers of drug abuse.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Schools are required to teach children about the harmful effects of drugs by the national curriculum science order. The Department has published "Drug Misuse and the Young", a booklet of guidance for teachers, and has funded the development of curriculum materials for use in schools. We also provide grant support for local authorities' drugs education activities.

Mr. Taylor: With the sickening evidence of the disaster that drug taking is causing in American schools, particularly with regard to crack, to which addiction can be almost instantaneous, will my hon. Friend provide even more guidance and resources to primary and secondary school teachers in Britain so that we can nip drug addiction in the bud?

Mr. Howarth: The Department has issued in bulk copies of a fact sheet on crack, with space for local information to be overprinted, to all drug education co-ordinators. It is for them to make a judgment about the appropriate use of the material in local circumstances. We believe that campaigns and shock-horror approaches are likely to prove counter-productive and that the right approach is to provide education about drugs in the general context of health education which stresses the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and helps equip young people with the skills that they need to resist the pressures to abuse drugs and alcohol.

Mr. Vaz: Does the Minister accept that it is a very serious problem and that if we learn from the mistakes of the American Government, surely we must consider the possibility of establishing a drugs helpline with telephone numbers publicised in our schools and colleges? That would enable children and young people to telephone the helpline and would make the authorities aware of the extent and the amount of drugs in a particular locality, enabling them to target the resources where they are most needed.

Mr. Howarth: I agree with the hon. Gentleman about the importance of monitoring the situation on the ground and providing the ready recourse to help and expert advice that he advocates. That is one possibility which I very much hope local education authorities will consider and which drugs education co-ordinators will have very much in mind. It is an example of information that could be overprinted on the fact sheet about crack that is being made widely available.

Mr. Rathbone: While welcoming my hon. Friend's answer and endorsing the Government's efforts to improve drug and health education in schools, will my hon. Friend pay further attention to the efforts of the Life education centres which were founded in Australia by the Rev. Ted Notts and which have done such a marvellous job? Does he agree that they could be adapted for use in this country to a much greater degree than hitherto?

Mr. Howarth: My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that there has been Government contact with Life education centres in a number of Departments. I plan to make direct contact with them.

Testing

9. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will announce plans for testing at seven years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The first statutory assessments of pupils at the end of key stage 1 will be in summer 1991 —in English, mathematics and science. The arrangements will be set out in orders under section 4(2)(c) of the Education Reform Act 1988. Drafts of those orders will be published next spring.

Mr. Thompson: Has the Secretary of State had the opportunity to read correspondence from headteachers of first schools in Northumberland that has been sent to him in the past two weeks complaining about the fact that they are understaffed, under-resourced, underpaid and cannot cope with the introduction of the national curriculum and local management of schools and now, superimposed on that, a testing system? Does the Secretary of State agree that it would be better to drop the whole idea?

Mr. MacGregor: I am aware of the correspondence, and my hon. Friends and I will respond to it. I am

sympathetic with the point about the heavy amount of work caused by the introduction of the national curriculum. I am keen to ensure, so far as I possibly can, that its phasing in is compatible with schools coping with it. The national curriculum reforms have been widely welcomed, and we do not want to lose the momentum of that progress. I therefore do not accept that we should delay the programme for the standard assessment tasks, which is a crucial part of the curriculum.

Mr. Hind: Will my right hon. Friend make the assessments for seven-year-olds available to local authorities as soon as possible? He will no doubt be aware that in local authorities such as those in Lancashire, statements of educational needs are being supplied desperately slowly to parents because of inadequate resources from psychologists and because of lack of information from schools. In ensuring that assessments for seven-year-olds are readily available, will he speed up that process?

Mr. MacGregor: I have already made it clear that the draft orders for seven-year-olds' assessments will be published next spring. I am aware that teachers are keen to know more about what the standard assessment tasks will consist of. That is not the point that my hon. Friend made, but it is the point about which most teachers are concerned. The Schools Examination and Assessment Council will publish training packs to help primary teachers early in the new year. It is important, however, that teachers should recognise that the first trial of the standard assessment tasks in 1991 will not be reported. The first reported year will therefore be 1992. Clearly, there is time to get this right, and I am anxious to get on with it.

Ms. Armstrong: Is the Minister aware that teachers are concerned about their ability to teach the curriculum without knowing how it will be tested? Receiving test information nine months after the curriculum has started is not good enough. Will he assure hon. Members that the seven-year-olds' tasks will be assessments and not standard written tests, for which the Prime Minister has been asking?

Mr. MacGregor: Everyone was keen to get on with the national curriculum, but that inevitably means that everything must be done in an ordered programme. The standard assessment tasks will not take effect until the 1991 trial. I fully recognise teachers' desire to know what those tasks will be, which is why I am keen to get the training packs out early in the new year. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I appeal to hon. Members to desist from having private conversations.

School Transport

10. **Mr. Haselhurst:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that local authority school transport plans are not restricting parental choice of school.

Mr. Alan Howarth: In December 1981, the Department issued a circular letter to all local education authorities on the relationship between school transport and choice of school. That advice is still current. A copy is in the Library of the House.

Mr. Haselhurst: Is my hon. Friend aware that sometimes the boundaries of catchment areas seem to be arbitrary and that it is possible for local authorities to deny free school transport by the simple expedient of not having a catchment area? Will he therefore undertake to review the present guidelines to ensure that no unfair discrimination is taking place?

Mr. Howarth: My hon. Friend has raised a particular case on behalf of his constituents, on which we are consulting the local education authority and which I shall consider very carefully. The Education Reform Act 1988 did not alter the duties and powers of local education authorities in relation to school transport, but we are most anxious to ensure that local education authorities, wherever they can, give parents practical support so that they can exercise an effective right of choice. As my hon. Friend asked, I shall keep the matter carefully under review.

Mr. Key: I am sure that my hon. Friend will acknowledge that as winter sets in the choice of parents is restricted not only by finance but by safety. I welcome the change in the law made by the Education Reform Act, but will he consider further extending the experiment by offering an education grant to local education authorities and schools under local management systems for schools to fund bus services, particularly in local areas, so that when they are not being used by pupils they can be used for the benefit of the community?

Mr. Howarth: I shall certainly reflect carefully on my hon. Friend's suggestion. He will be aware that the Education (No.2) Act 1986 requires that authorities should have regard to, among other matters, the age of the pupil and the nature of the route or alternative routes that he or she could reasonably be expected to take. That provision clearly asks authorities to have particular regard for safety.

Higher Education (Funding)

11. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he has had with the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council on the question of funding higher education.

Mr. Jackson: This is one of the matters dealt with in the discussions we have from time to time with the funding council.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Is the Minister aware that Cumbria, especially west Cumbria, is exporting a high number of students for higher education to all parts of the United Kingdom? Will the hon. Gentleman lend his support to the provision for a far greater level of higher education within the county and, if necessary, lend his support to the establishment of a polytechnic if the demand for one is clearly established?

Mr. Jackson: The Government's intention is that there should be an expansion of higher education. The questions of how and where this should occur need to be considered further. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman's proposal for Cumbria will be given serious consideration.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Will my hon. Friend confirm his expressed intention of doubling the number of students in higher education? Within how many years does he expect

to see that doubling? What proportion of that number are expected to go into polytechnics? Does my hon. Friend have any plans to create new polytechnics?

Mr. Jackson: One of the Government's great achievements has been the increase of more than 25 per cent. in the number of students in higher education since we came to office—more than 200,000 students, a rise well above target. We know that because of the reduction in the number of 18-year-olds, we will find it difficult to do more than maintain student numbers in the 1990s. We expect a substantial increase in the demand for and supply of higher education as we go into the next century.

Mr. Andrew Smith: Will the Minister now tell the House the answer to the question that he and the Secretary of State so miserably failed to answer during the student loan debates? How will the Government pay for this commitment to double the numbers over the next 25 years? Will they choose the route of entitlement and increased public expenditure, or will they take the path of privilege and introduce private tuition fees?

Mr. Jackson: It is the hon. Gentleman and the Labour party that have to answer the question about how they would pay for their proposals. The Government's answer is clear. We propose to introduce through the student loan a means to enable students to anticipate some of their income as graduates to help fund their higher education. That will enable an expansion of higher education to be funded.

Mr. Jessel: Is my hon. Friend aware that, although the PCFC has had an increase in funding of more than 6 per cent., it has offered only 2·5 per cent. to the excellent St. Mary's college in Twickenham, whose lack of enthusiasm for the PCFC is shared by me?

Mr. Jackson: I am looking forward to meeting my hon. Friend and his colleagues from his constituency later today when we can discuss the matter further. The way in which the PCFC allocates the resources provided by the Government is a matter for it.

Student Loans

12. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of the letters he has received about student loans have agreed in principle with his proposals.

Mr. Jackson: Letters have expressed a variety of views on different aspects of our proposals. Many support the underlying principle that students in higher education should contribute to their costs.

Mr. Strang: Has the Minister seen the survey by Dr. Burnhill of Edinburgh university which suggests that for every student from a professional middle-class home who will be deterred by a system of student loans, five students from manual working-class homes will be discouraged? Is not that the experience of Sweden? Should not we be taking action to increase the number of students from working-class homes who go on to higher education, rather than the opposite?

Mr. Jackson: I entirely agree, but that is not the experience of student loan schemes overseas. That experience shows that such schemes are compatible with higher rates of participation by students from working-class backgrounds than we have achieved in 30 years of the most generous grants system in the world.

Mr. Rhodes James: How does the Minister equate the Government's proposals with the 1987 Conservative manifesto?

Mr. Jackson: I have no doubt that the Government's proposals are readily reconcilable with those in the Conservative manifesto, which said that there should be an expansion of higher education. This is a means of assisting with that. We should remember the words of the Robbins report in 1960 which said that

"the arguments of justice in distribution and of the advantage of increasing individual responsibility"

pointed towards the eventual introduction of student loans.

Mr. Straw: Can the Minister explain why there is an item on the tapes now that the Government have agreed a system with the banks regarding the student loan scheme? Why has no statement been made to the House today? Is the Minister aware that the banks themselves are now disowning the scheme? Lord Alexander of Weedon, chairman of the National Westminster bank has just written to me on behalf of NatWest to say:

"We are in no sense promoting or supporting the introduction of the legislation on student loans".

Will the Minister comment on the fact that NatWest has now abandoned its support for the scheme?

Mr. Jackson: All the way through, our discussions have been punctuated by speculation about the attitude of the banks. Let us wait to see what it will be.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Cook: Will the Prime Minister explain why it is necessary for her foremost energy adviser, the noble Lord Marshall of Goring to resign, when the Ministers responsible for so many mistakes have kept their positions under her patronage, or is this just another factor that she finds incomprehensible?

The Prime Minister: Lord Marshall is considering his position in the light of the Government's decision. It is premature to speculate. It is a matter for the noble Lord.

Mr. Gregory: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the community charge is the fairest way to raise money? Does she deplore the new system that has been suggested by the Socialists—a combination of a property charge and income tax—which effectively means a snoopers' charter?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I believe that the community charge is the fairest way to make a contribution to local authority expenditure. It gives generous rebates—more

generous than those given under the old rating system. I notice that the Opposition agree that rates are totally unfair, but that they have not been able to find a successful alternative which has not been blown out of the water before they have got very far with it.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister aware that she encouraged right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House last night, when she declared that:

"We must stretch out the hand of co-operation, and develop new forms of association with the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe"?

Will she tell the House precisely what new ideas she has had to give substance to that fine declaration?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman should be aware that we have trading agreements, through the Community, with some of those countries, for example, Hungary. We do not have an association agreement between the Community and those countries, as we have, for example, with Turkey. I thought then that it would be wise, as I thought that the countries of Eastern Europe would naturally wish to enhance their contacts with the West, to consider an association agreement between the Community and those countries.

Mr. Kinnock: I am grateful to the Prime Minister for that answer. Is the right hon. Lady aware that she was also correct to remind everyone last night that Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Leipzig and Dresden—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister aware that she was also absolutely right last night to remind everyone that Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Dresden and Leipzig are great European cities—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This takes a great deal of time. *[Interruption.]* Order. At this rate, I shall be able to call few Back Bench Members.

Mr. Kinnock: Should those great European cities——

The Minister of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Alan Clark): Name them.

Mr. Kinnock: Does the Prime Minister think that those great European cities should continue to be the target for short-range nuclear weapons?

The Prime Minister: I pointed out over a year ago in the Bruges speech that Warsaw, Prague and Budapest were also part of Europe, and what a pity that the right hon. Gentleman did not congratulate me on that. I do not believe that the events in eastern Europe would have taken place but for the staunchness of NATO. One could never rely on the Labour party to support NATO.

Mr. Kinnock: To give some validity to what the Prime Minister is saying, will she tell us whether those great European cities should be the target of short-range nuclear weapons?

The Prime Minister: We should stick by our agreements with NATO, which were signed by all NATO countries.

Sir David Price: Does my right hon. Friend recall the words of that great and noble man, the late General de Gaulle, that Europe runs from the Atlantic to the Urals? Will she give the House an undertaking that she does not see the European Community as being fulfilled until it runs from the Atlantic to the Urals?

The Prime Minister: The European Community is only one manifestation of the identity of Europe. There is a wider one and I do not think that we should confuse the two in any way. Most of us would now hope that democracy will soon run from the Atlantic up to the Chinese border at any rate and eventually beyond that.

Mr. Ashdown: Why is it that in her bleak and visionless speech last night, the Prime Minister sought to return Europe to that uneasy balance of power between the nations which has twice done such damage to our continent this century? Why is it that while the rest of Europe is on a march to unity through closer integration, she is seeking to lead Britain into increasing isolation?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman speaks absolute nonsense. It has been the staunchness of NATO which has helped to see the birth of democracy in eastern Europe. The right hon. Gentleman will recall that our views have frequently prevailed in the Community and if he had looked at our record for getting down constraints in Europe, he would have found that we were way out ahead of many other nations in implementing the directives. I hope that he would also have agreed with what seemed to be the almost unanimous verdict in the House about a European monetary union of the kind proposed by Delors. It seems to me that stages 2 and 3 have been totally and utterly rejected by all parties in the House.

Sir Jim Spicer: Does not my right hon. Friend find it strange that Opposition Members, who played such an ignoble role in 1983 and 1984, at a time of great danger to the western world, should now be saying that they played some part in what has now been achieved as a result of what she and her colleagues did then?

The Prime Minister: I do not think that freedom would have come about or that there would have been the prospect of democracy in eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union unless we had staunchly defended freedom through NATO, together with the essential part of the nuclear deterrent. As I pointed out in my speech last night, there was at one time a doctrine in the West that we had merely to contain Communism. After that, we put freedom on a peaceful offensive and it is partly that and partly defence that has led to the remarkable results that we now see in eastern Europe.

Q2. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the continuing corruption of women and young people by British Telecom and its dubious associates, and Oftel's inability to do anything about it by means of regulations, could I offer the Prime Minister a deal? If I bring to the House an amendment to the Telecommunications Act 1984, will she instruct her Chief Whip to find parliamentary time for it while I provide a majority to bring it into force?

The Prime Minister: With regard to the substantive part of the hon. Gentleman's question, he knows that I would not interfere with the duties of Whips. *[Interruption.]* I

could wish that Opposition Members had more respect for the authority of their Whips on some occasions. It would greatly assist parliamentary business. Sir Bryan Carsberg, the Director General of Telecommunications has announced plans for closer control over premium rate services. He intends to introduce the new controls on 8 December, so perhaps the hon. Gentleman's help will not be required.

Q3. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Gorman: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the comments by the president of the Bundesbank in support of her view on the advantages of competition between the 12 European state currencies? Has she thought of discussing with our European partners the logic of expanding that idea to its conclusion—the evolution of a free market in currencies and banking such as existed in Britain before 1840 and produced the financial stability and low interest rates which were the foundation of our economic prosperity in the 19th century?

The Prime Minister: I confess that we had not thought of my hon. Friend's ingenious solution. As she knows, we have put forward alternative plans for economic and monetary union in the Community which would preserve the authority of this national Parliament. I understand that Karl-Otto Poehl has made supportive remarks about them and I hope that they will find much support in the rest of the Community.

Q4. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Callaghan: Is the Prime Minister aware that the arts are now suffering from their worst ever financial crisis because of a £40 million shortfall in the Government arts grant? How does she reconcile that with her comment when she first came to office that there would be no "candle-end economies" in the arts? Before the final curtain falls on the arts, will she help them out of this financial crisis?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Gentleman knows, grants to the Arts Council have increased in real terms and a fantastic amount of sponsorship of the arts by industry has given great help to orchestras, theatres and many artistic events. If the arts are popular—I fully support them and agree that they are popular—I hope that people will spend more of their own money on attending arts events as their standard of living increases.

Sir Bernard Braine: Does my right hon. Friend agree that in this exciting, hopeful but still uncertain time, it is not rhetoric but deeds that count? What is her view of the need to give practical help to the emergent democracies of Poland and, in particular, Hungary?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I agree with my right hon. Friend's fundamental assertion that times of uncertainty can also be times of great danger, and that a wish to have democracy is nothing like having the capacity to set up that structure and get it working. We are already, both with the European Community and on our own account, giving practical help to Poland and Hungary in material terms. Help is also being given through the Community and we have relaxed some of the quota restrictions on trade for Hungary and Poland. That is practical help and we shall also consider further matters.

Q5. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. McFall: The weekend papers tell us that the noble Lord Marshall of the Central Electricity Generating Board will receive more than £300,000 as a pay-off for the Prime Minister's monumental blunder in not listening to her advisers when they told her to withdraw all existing nuclear power plants from the privatisation proposal. More crucially, when will the Prime Minister pay off the moral debt to adult and child haemophiliacs? Despite last night's vote, does she agree that all these adults and children are more deserving than the noble Lord Marshall because they are not responsible for the position in which they find themselves?

The Prime Minister: Should Lord Marshall resign, compensation will be a matter for negotiation according to his contract and will be carried out between the two people involved. With regard to haemophiliacs, the hon. Gentleman will know that the Government have made an ex gratia payment of £10 million to the Macfarlane trust. By virtue of their nature, many charitable funds have to go to those in need. £10 million was given to the Macfarlane trust, not all of which has been committed. When the ex gratia payment was made it was indicated that if it should be insufficient we would consider making greater payments to the fund. The hon. Gentleman knows full well that I cannot comment on court cases from this Box.

Ambulance Dispute

3.30 pm

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the letter sent yesterday afternoon by Mr. Tom Crosby, London's acting chief ambulance officer, and the threat to the accident and emergency service presently being offered by ambulance crews."

Yesterday afternoon, a little after 3.30 pm, all 71 London ambulance stations received a letter warning the crews that if they continued to respond to direct 999 calls from hospitals, doctors, members of the public and even some police officers, they would not only be in direct contravention of management instructions, but would leave themselves liable for criminal prosecution for the theft of ambulances.

The precise words of Mr. Crosby's letter were:

"Driving on the public highway in a vehicle taken without its owner's consent and without authorised (by a controller) insurance cover will conceivably be constructed as breaches in the criminal law."

That is not only blackmail of the worst order, but also continues to use the lives of sick and ill patients as a stick with which to beat the ambulance crews to accept a pay cut by tightening up the lock-out of ambulance workers in London. It forces ambulance crews to choose between their patients' lives and their own possible criminal prosecution.

If Mr. Crosby is serious, what does he expect to happen? Are the police to arrest the crews as they leave the ambulance stations on mercy missions? Ambulance workers will not be bullied. The more they are kicked in the teeth by Mr. Crosby and the Secretary of State for Health, the more it brings them together. The action and determination of the caring women and men of this country's ambulance service is spreading.

If this urgent debate is not granted, a further week must pass before we are allowed to make a subsequent application. From midnight tonight, workers in Coventry, Warwickshire and the rest of the west midlands will escalate their action and, in their words, take the London road. As in London, the 999 service in my area will be preserved at all costs because accident and emergency crews are pledged to provide it, whether they are paid or suspended.

This escalation is the sole responsibility of a hard-faced and hard-hearted Secretary of State and his craven hireling, Mr. Crosby. Mr. Crosby should be sacked. The Secretary of State should resign. The Army should be withdrawn. The workers should be paid a living wage before the Government's tactics put yet another life at risk. I urge you to grant this application, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The letter of Acting Chief Ambulance Officer Crosby and the provision of an accident and emergency service by ambulance workers."

As the House knows, under Standing Order No. 20, I have to announce my decision without giving reasons. I have listened with care to what the hon. Gentleman has said and, as he knows, I have to decide whether his application should be given precedence over the business already set down for today or for tomorrow. I regret that in this case, the matters raised do not meet the requirments of the Standing Order, and I therefore cannot submit his application to the House.

Points of Order

3.30 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, the Lobby was briefed on the basis that today we would hear a statement on the White Paper on community care. This afternoon, a written answer was deposited in the Library, which opens with the following sentence from the Secretary of State for Health:

"I am pleased to be able to announce that our White Paper, 'Caring for People: Community Care in the next Decade and Beyond' will be published on Thursday 16 November."

As the House will immediately appreciate, Thursday is the one sitting day of the week on which it is not possible to make an oral statement to the House. That is presumably why that day was chosen. This choice of date is an affront to the House. In 15 years as a Member of Parliament I cannot recall a single occasion on which a Minister was prepared to say that a White Paper was ready for publication but will not be published until the day on which the House rises.

The House knows how pressing is this issue. It also knows from the press reports how controversial some elements of that White Paper will be, such as the proposal to put the home help service out to private contract. I submit that it would be an outrage if that White Paper was produced on the day on which the Secretary of State could avoid answering questions in the House.

As you will be aware, Mr. Speaker, it is the function of your office to defend the right of the House to challenge and scrutinise Ministers. I invite the representatives of the Government who are present, including the Leader of the House, the Secretary of State and the Chief Whip, to assure the House that, if it is not possible to produce this White Paper before Prorogation, the White Paper will not be published before the House sits again.

Several Hon. Members: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I will hear them all at once.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I support entirely what the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) has said. It is a scandal and an outrage that this procedure is being used. That is compounded by the fact that the press is now carrying reports that the Health Bill, which will be produced only six or seven days after the White Paper, will contain the Government's implementation of contents of the White Paper. Does that not show the contempt with which the Government are treating the House of Commons?

The Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the House will know, this White Paper arises from a statement that I made in the House a short time ago, setting out the policy and the Government's decisions in the light of the Griffiths report on community care. That statement was reasonably non-controversial. Large parts of it received a welcome on both sides of the House. It was my intention to produce this White Paper before the House rose, but I regret to say that it is still with the printers and it is not possible to produce it before Thursday this week.

The publication of this White Paper would not normally give rise to any need for a statement. Nor are its contents, as leaked by the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman), accurately described. The White Paper will follow quite naturally from the statement that I made a few weeks ago.

It was precisely to avoid allegations that I was trying to smuggle out the White Paper on the day the House was prorogued that I decided to answer that written question today and to acknowledge openly that it would not be possible to produce the White Paper before Thursday. I shall be in London on Thursday and shall be freely available, and if the White Paper produces a sensational new controversy, I look forward to answering in the usual way. However, I do not think that it will contain more than useful detail. It certainly will not enlarge the level of controversy beyond the very limited extent to which there is controversy around this statement at the moment.

Mr. Robin Cook: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Secretary of State may well be in London on Thursday, but the House will not be sitting on Thursday. That is the point at issue. I am entirely willing, if the Secretary of State is going to tell us—*[Interruption.]* This is a serious matter which touches on the privilege of the House. If the Secretary of State is telling the House that he cannot produce the White Paper today or tomorrow because of printing difficulties, that is entirely acceptable. However, I invite the Secretary of State to assure the House that the White Paper will not be published while the House is not sitting, and that it will be retained until an occasion when the Secretary of State can make a statement to the House and can answer questions in the House.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have spent about 18 months being accused of dragging my feet over Griffiths and community care and of not producing policy quickly enough. I am now producing a White Paper as readily as possible in line with the statement that I made to the House. Everybody wishes to know the detail of the policy, and the White Paper is being eagerly awaited. I do not propose to delay it and have explained the reasons why it cannot be produced before Thursday.

If the hon. Gentleman is alarmed by the reports, created by his hon. Friend the Member for Peckham, that the White Paper is somehow about privatising home helps and the caring services, he can be reassured that it contains no such proposals, and that it is in line with the statement that I have given.

Several Hon. Members: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think than any further points of order can arise——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The whole House knows that this is not a matter of order for me——

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House knows that this has really been a question and answer session across the Dispatch Box. It is not a point of order.

Mr. Hughes *rose*——

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No, I will not—*[Interruption.]* I will not take it because it is not a matter of order for me. I will take any other points of order.

Mr. Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield): On a different point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to draw to your attention and to the attention of the House written question No. 289 on today's Order Paper, on the Government's response to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Brogan and others concerning detention under the prevention of terrorism legislation. This is a matter of such importance that my hon. Friends and I were astounded to learn that, not only has that written question been tabled—we believe it to be what is known in the House as a planted question—but the Government have used the written answer to make a statement on this most important matter.

When the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 was going through the House, as a member of the Standing Committee I recall that we were assured that, when the matter of permanent derogation came up, the Secretary of State for the Home Department would make a statement to the House. We believe that it is an abuse of the House that, yet again, the Government have smuggled out a most important decision on a day such as this under the guise of a written answer.

Mr. Speaker: Of course, it is not a matter for me whether questions are answered in the form of a written answer or not. It is not a matter of order. Whatever sympathy I have with having statements made in the House, they tend to greatly delay our business. I must remind the House that today we have a timetable motion, followed by opposed private business and then a prayer. The House will appreciate that the opposed private business can go on for three hours, whatever time it is entered upon, which might affect the time for the prayer.

Mr. Cryer *rose*——

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will take Mr. McNamara.

Mr. McNamara: I will bear in mind what you have said, Mr. Speaker, but what concerns me is that in their reply the Government talk about the threat posed by terrorism connected with the affairs of Northern Ireland and then state:

"The power to hold terrorist suspects for a period of up to seven years"——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McNamara: Seven years.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It may be, but that is not a point of order for me. The hon. Gentleman is referring to an answer to a question.

Mr. Cryer: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it a different point of order?

Mr. Cryer: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: In that case, I will hear it.

Mr. Cryer: Do you recall, Mr. Speaker, that when, in the past, statements have not been made and publications have not been provided, there has been some difficulty with Black Rod getting into the Chamber and bringing the Session of Parliament to an end? Black Rod needs permission to enter the Chamber because of the age-old tradition that, as the representative of the monarch, Black Rod can enter only with our permission. If the Government do not provide information—it has happened in the past—the Commons might refuse Black Rod entry, and that refusal would be in order.

Mr. Speaker: I certainly hope that that kind of disruption would not happen—*[Interruption.]* Order. We establish the identity of Black Rod, but he has a right to enter the Chamber.

Mr. Wallace: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it on a different subject?

Mr. Wallace: Yes. You will be aware, Mr. Speaker, that, often late at night, the House is invited to approve what in the past were called rate support grant orders and what are now called revenue support grant orders. In a recent revenue support grant instrument, a substantial error was made by the Scottish Office in regard to the amount due to the city of Glasgow district council. It is my information that the Secretary of State for Scotland intends to issue a statement in Scotland tonight on that matter. As there is an admission that one important error has been made, and as it is likely that other important errors may appear in measures passed by the House, do you agree that it would be more appropriate for the Secretary of State or another Scottish Minister to explain that error to the House and be available to be questioned about it?

Mr. Speaker: It may be more appropriate, but it is not a matter relating to order in the Chamber.

Mr. Corbyn: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When making his application under Standing Order No. 20, my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) raised the question of a letter from the chief of the London ambulance service——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have dealt with that matter. I cannot help the hon. Gentleman any further.

Mr. Corbyn: Further to my point of order, Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: Order. No. I have told the House that, whatever happens tonight, opposed private business may go on for three hours. That will affect the prayer. I believe that, in the interests of the whole House, we should now move on.

Overseas Aid (Assistance to the Poorest)

3.46 pm

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Overseas Development and Co-operation Act 1980 to ensure that the bulk of United Kingdom official development assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries and the poorest people living in them and that a substantial proportion of aid spending is devoted to agricultural rural development to benefit especially women and children; and to require the Overseas Development Administration to establish a timetable during which overall official United Nations aid targets may be reached.

My Bill sets out priorities and moral imperatives for overseas aid. It highlights the hypocricy of a Government who laud personal giving to the Third world but more than cancel that out with public parsimony. The Bill must be campaigned for in the short term and, under the next Labour Government, should be implemented. It insists that those in the refugee camps whom we can film, we can also feed. A wealthy country which fails to meet its responsibilities to the Third world exposes its own moral inadequacies.

The 1980s should have been a decade of advancement in the developing world. Instead, it has been a time of ever-increasing debt and of the negative transfer of resources from the developing to the developed world. Debt owned by the developing world now totals about £700 billion, an increase of one third in the last four years. In 1985, developing countries paid their creditors $29 billion more in interest and principal than they received in aid. Those trends are continuing. In other words, the situation is deteriorating.

As UNICEF recently disclosed, average family incomes in Africa and Latin America have fallen by between 10 and 25 per cent. since 1980. The poorest groups are the hardest hit. An increasing number are finding it more difficult to obtain even the basic necessities of life. Child malnutrition is now on the increase in most developing countries. Governments in debt must reduce their social services bills, which means reduced health care and less education.

Without falling into the simplification of citing goodies and baddies, it is clear that Her Majesty's Government must take at least some share of the blame. Since 1979, they have allowed Britain's aid programme substantially to deteriorate. In real terms, Britain's aid budget was allowed to fall by 36 per cent. between 1979 and 1987.

In terms of percentage of GNP—a crucial measure recognised by all donor nations—the figures are equally damning. In the last year of the last Labour Government, British aid had reached the level of 0·52 per cent., of GNP, and the United Nations goal of 0·7 per cent. of GNP was in sight. The incoming Tory Government reversed that trend and began to downgrade the importance of aid. It declined steadily year by year, until, by 1987, it had reached the miserable figure of 0·28 per cent. of GNP. In 1988, it made a small recovery, rallying to 0·32 per cent.

In theory, the Government are committed to achieving the United Nations target "when economic circumstances permit". The Prime Minister said that at the 1983 general election. We have since heard that phrase in a different context. In evidence to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, the Secretary of State for the Environment described the United Nations target as "slightly spurious". That reveals the true Tory attitude.

The decline in British aid as a percentage of GNP has reduced us from sixth in the league table of the 18 Western aid givers in 1979 to 14th today. Those figures should be deeply embarrassing, as other countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands seem to manage the target and those that do not are at least edging towards it. For instance, since 1979 Italy has increased its aid by 300 per cent., using the same criterion.

Clearly, the Government have no commitment to the 0·7 per cent. figure. That is why, in December 1988, Britain was criticised by other donor nations in the development assistance committee of the Organisation for Economc Co-operation and Development when it called on this Government to

"reverse the downward trend in the United Kingdom's ODA/GNP ratio . . . and to make sustained progress towards the 0·7 per cent. ODA target."

Of course that target is achievable, and the Bill demands a timetable to achieve it. We hear much about the Government's budget surplus, part of which is being used to pay off the national debt. Surely that should be a lower priority than the opportunity to benefit the poorest citizens of the world. The next Labour Government will not confuse priorities, and will work towards the 0·7 per cent. target. It is not a "spurious" figure, and we will achieve it in the lifetime of one Parliament—five years.

It is not just the amount of aid which matters, but its quality, and the Bill recognises that. The Government have presided over a deterioration in standards. The last Labour Government had an enviable record in delivering effective aid where it was needed—in the poorest countries, among the poor and disadvantaged social groups. Those criteria seem to have been lost in the general downgrading of aid under the Government. The Government seem prepared to praise charity events such as Live Aid and Comic Relief, but when it comes to finding money themselves, their attitude changes.

It is astonishing that, despite the crisis in Africa in the past decade, and during a period of massive individual giving in this country, British aid to Africa suffered a decline of 26·5 per cent. between 1979 and 1987. British people are generous, but the British Government apparently do not share their concern. That is a tragedy and an outrage.

The Government do not seem to know the meaning of the word "quality" when it comes to aid. They are far keener on providing easy loans for middle-income countries, and on winning contracts for British exporting firms than on providing effectively targeted aid. Where they do provide funds, they can be way off the mark. For instance, British aid to Bangladesh has tended to be concentrated on large infrastructure and industry projects such as the electric power project for Dhaka. Yet the majority of the population live in rural areas, so it is difficult to see what they will gain from those projects. Aid needs to be properly targeted if it is to do most good. That is why we must reject the notion of the Overseas Development Administration as an adjunct of the Department of Trade and Industry. If the Government supported British industry at home rather than manipulating aid funds for use abroad, we would all be better off.

Of course there is a role for British industry in overseas aid and aid giving is not totally altruistic. British firms will gain from the export of necessary items. However, as the

[Mr. Brian Wilson]

Bill insists, aid should be targeted on the most needy. The Department of Trade and Industry should not be the master of policy.

Aid policy must be sensitive to environmental concerns and there should be a special place for women. There ought to be a women's unit within the ODA—as the Bill sets out—to take account of women's views and needs. In Africa, women form the majority of the food growers in the economy and their essential role in child rearing makes their importance for future development almost impossible to exaggerate. Yet, under the ODA United Kingdom aid programme, only one in six training places go to Third-world women.

We have a duty not only to make bilateral aid more effective. We have a key role to play also in multilateral aid, as over 40 per cent. of all United Kingdom aid is administered through international institutions. In 1987, £540 million of British aid went through multilateral institutions, principally the EC, the United Nations and the World Bank. The bulk of such moneys, however, is not used as efficiently as it could be. We are a major contributor to the EC—over half our multilateral aid goes to its European development fund and food aid programme. We should work towards an improvement in the administration of such aid. Far too much emphasis is still placed in the EC on large prestige projects. That, too, runs against the spirit of my Bill.

The overseas aid debate does not occupy a sufficiently high place on the political agenda. The problem does not lie with lack of concern at individual level, as is demonstrated by the response to the images of famine and despair when they are presented to the British public. It lies in large measure in the lack of information about the Government's niggardly role and the specific use of the aid programme. The Bill may help in a small way to stimulate debate.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Brian Wilson, Miss Joan Lestor, Mr. Bernie Grant, Mr. Tom Clarke, Ms. Marjorie Mowlam, Mr. Sam Galbraith, Mr. David Blunkett, Mr. Keith Vaz, Mr. George Galloway, Mr. Donald Anderson, Ms. Diane Abbott and Mrs. Ann Clwyd.

Overseas Aid (Assistance to the Poorest) Bill

Mr. Brian Wilson, accordingly presented a Bill to amend the Overseas Development and Co-operation Act 1980 to ensure that the bulk of United Kingdom official development assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries and the poorest people living in them and that a substantial proportion of aid spending is devoted to agricultural rural development to benefit especially women and children; and to require the Overseas Development Administration to establish a timetable during which overall official United Nations aid targets may be reached: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Wednesday 15 November and to be printed. [Bill 220.]

Self-governing Schools Etc. (Scotland) Bill

(Allocation of Time)

3.57 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): I beg to move,

That the Order of the House [3rd May] be supplemented as follows:

Lords Amendments

1.—(1) The proceedings on Consideration of the Lords Amendments shall be completed at this day's sitting and shall for the purposes of paragraph 13 of the Order [3rd May] be regarded as proceedings on an allotted day.

(2) The Order in which those proceedings are to be taken shall be Lords Amendment 18, Lords Amendment 25, Lords Amendment 80, Lords Amendment 1, Lords Amendment 66 and 67, Lords Amendment 81, Lords Amendments 83 to 88, Lords Amendment 2, Lords Amendment 40, Lords Amendment 44, Lords Amendment 62, Lords Amendment 65, Lords Amendment 92, Lords Amendments 68 to 78, Lords Amendment 9, Lords Amendment 47, Lords Amendment 52, Lords Amendments 56 to 61, Lords Amendments 63 and 64, Lords Amendment 79, Lords Amendment 91, Lords Amendments 93 and 94, Lords Amendment 3, Lords Amendments 5 to 8, Lords Amendments 11 to 13, Lords Amendments 20 and 21, Lords Amendments 26 to 29, Lords Amendments 48 to 51, Lords Amendments 53 to 55, Lords Amendment 4, Lords Amendment 17, Lords Amendment 39, Lords Amendment 10, Lords Amendments 14 and 15, Lords Amendment 82, Lords Amendments 89 and 90, Lords Amendment 16, Lords Amendment 19, Lords Amendments 22 to 24, Lords Amendments 41 to 43, Lords Amendments 30 to 38, and Lords Amendments 45 and 46.

(3) Subject to the provisions of the Order [3rd May], each part of those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at the end of such period beginning with the commencement of the proceedings on the Motion for this Order as is of the length specified in the second column of the Table set out below.

TABLE

Proceedings

Lords Amendments	*Length of period*
Nos. 18, 25, 80, 1, 66, 67, 81, 83 to 88, 2, 40, 44, 62, 65, 92, 68 to 78, 9, 47, 52, 56 to 61, 63, 64 79, 91, 93 and 94.	One hour and thirty minutes.
Nos. 3, 5 to 8, 11 to 13, 20, 21, 26 to 29, 48 to 51, 53 to 55, 4, 17, 39, 10, 14, 15, 82, 89, 90, 16, 19, 22 to 24 and 41 to 43.	Two hours.
Nos. 30 to 36.	Two hours and thirty minutes.
Remaining Lords Amendments.	Three hours.

2.—(1) For the purposes of bringing any proceedings to a conclusion in accordance with paragraph 1 above—

(a) Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided and, if that Question is for the amendment of a Lords Amendment, shall then put forthwith the Question on any further Amendment of the said Lords Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown and on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in the said Lords Amendment or, as the case may be, in the said Lords Amendment as amended;

(b) Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining Lords Amendments as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—

(i) put forthwith the Question on any Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown to a Lords Amendment and then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made

by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in their Amendment, or as the case may be, in their Amendment as amended;

(ii) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in a Lords Amendment;

(iii) put forthwith with respect to the Amendments designated by Mr. Speaker which have not been disposed of the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendments; and

(iv) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the remaining Lords Amendments;

(c) as soon as the House has agreed or disagreed with the Lords in any of their Amendments Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith a separate Question on any other Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown relevant to that Lords Amendment.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

Stages subsequent to first Consideration of Lords Amendments

3.—(1) The proceedings on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion one hour after the commencement of the proceedings.

(2) For the purpose of bringing those proceedings to a conclusion—

(a) Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided, and shall then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown which is related to the Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining items in the Lords Message as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—

(i) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown on any item;

(ii) in the case of each remaining item designated by Mr. Speaker, put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in their Proposal; and

(iii) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in all the remaining Lords Proposals.

Supplemental provisions with respect to certain proceedings

4.—(1) Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown for the appointment and quorum of a Committee to draw up Reasons.

(2) A Committee appointed to draw up Reasons shall report before the conclusion of the sitting at which it is appointed.

5.—(1) In this paragraph "the proceedings" means proceedings on Consideration of Lords Amendments, on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill, on the appointment and quorum of a Committee to draw up Reasons and on the Report of such a Committee.

(2) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(3) No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

(4) If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), the bringing to a conclusion of any part of the proceedings which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

The Bill has had a good airing in the House, in Committee and in another place, and it is appropriate that the House should complete its scrutiny today, so that it can complete its passage on to the statute book and the country can begin to reap the benefits of the legislation. The purpose of the timetable motion is to enable the House to give proper and orderly consideration to the amendments made in another place, within a limit of time adequate for that to be done, and having regard to the relatively narrow range of topics covered by those amendments.

When my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland moved that the Bill should be given a Second Reading, he said:

"education does not consist only of what happens within school, and nor does what happens within schools interest only the teaching profession. The involvement of parents . . . is likely to bring results that will ultimately be to the benefit of the pupils themselves."—[*Official Report*, 6 March 1989; Vo. 148, c. 622.]

Throughout the past decade, the Government have consistently taken a lead in giving expression to the rights of parents and developing their role in the education process. The Bill represents the culmination of that development, and when it passes into law it will have a powerful and beneficial influence extending throughout the school system. We have put parents to the top of everyone's agenda, and we may claim credit for that, without in the least detracting from the credit due to those authorities, such as Strathclyde, which likewise have read the signs of the times and are now developing policies of their own to involve parents in the education process.

The Bill is quite distinct from the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988, which now is being implemented throughout Scotland. It is distinct because school boards are intended for every school—the uptake of that facility has been heartening—whereas nobody is put under any obligation to use the provisions for self-governing schools who does not wish to do so. At the same time, the Bill can also be seen as a natural development from the 1988 Act. Some schools may well see the possibility of self-governing status in due course as a logical next step from the school board, but we have stressed repeatedly that we have no specific target for the number of schools that should become self-governing. Both my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), have made that point. The very existence of the option for a school board, however, will ensure that the parental point of view expressed through the board is heard with proper respect.

We do not expect school boards in large numbers to move immediately towards self-government, but we consider it right that the option should be seen to be available to them from the outset. It is therefore time to complete proceedings on this Bill and bring it into effect. It has already had adequate time for consideration here and in another place. We spent 127 hours on it in the Standing Committee, followed by a full day on Report to the House. The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington), whom I welcome to the Dispatch Box in his new role, was not a member of the Committee, so I acquit him of responsibility for any aspect of its conduct. Suffice it to say that the Opposition were given ample, indeed generous, time, before the timetable motion and after it, to develop their arguments on aspects of the Bill that troubled them.

The Bill then had three full days of debate, a total of 18 hours, in another place, where the Opposition made a measured and constructive contribution. So I hope that

[Mr. Ian Lang]

the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie will not rise to complain that the Bill is being rushed through with undue haste.

The Bill returns to the House with 94 amendments. Of those, between 50 and 60 are, on any view of the matter, technical or drafting amendments whose purpose is to make the Bill clearer. Another 20 or so are necessary consequences of other more substantial amendments. Only a handful of amendments deal with matters of any substance, and I shall refer briefly to one of the most salient of them to illustrate my point.

The Bill originally provided that a ballot of parents on self-governing status could be initiated either at the request of a specified number of parents or by a single resolution of a school board. That remained in the Bill when it left this House. We were of course aware that the procedure for acquiring self-governing status was, in this and other respects, different from that for acquiring grant-maintained status under the Education Reform Act 1988.

Our procedure is swifter, and deliberately so. For example, under this Bill a school board will be required, after a positive ballot result, to produce its formal proposals within one month; the corresponding period allowed under the Education Reform Act is six months. That difference has not been questioned at any stage. It is common ground between Government and Opposition that, if there is to be a proposal for self-governing status, the issue should be settled as quickly as reasonably possible. Prolonged uncertainty is likely to affect a school's morale and reputation.

However, this must be balanced against another need that has been urged on the Government at successive stages of the Bill. It is one that we have always acknowledged—the need to ensure that the parents who vote in a ballot have a proper appreciation of what they are voting for. It was with that in mind that we accepted the amendment in the other place—I hope that the House will agree with it later this afternoon—to the effect that, when a board has made a resolution to call a ballot, it must first inform the education authority and then allow between four and six weeks to elapse, after which it must confirm its first resolution if it still wants to proceed with a ballot.

This means that the issue will be out in the public domain and open to debate for a fair length of time before the ballot. There can be no doubt that any education authority would want to respond, to make its views known to the school board and—very likely—to the parents directly at this stage. The school board, too, if it is in earnest, will want to use this time to consult the parents who elected it and state its case to them—indeed, it is likely to be under pressure to do so. The board will have to take some time to reflect on its initial decision and hear the responses that come back before finally deciding whether to go ahead with a ballot.

This amendment illustrates two aspects that characterise all the amendments that we are to consider today. In the first place, it represents a Government response to a constructive point made in debate; on the other hand, it does not represent a radical shift of policy on our part.

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): My hon. Friend will know that, in England, some local authorities have bludgeoned and intimidated parents into not taking up grant-maintained status. Is he taking that into consideration, and is he satisfied that the school boards will have enough resources to be able to convey their message equally forcefully to the parents?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend makes a relevant point. Of course the experience of colleagues south of the border is relevant to our consideration of this measure. I believe that we have made adequate provision in the Bill for my hon. Friend's point, but we shall certainly keep an eye on it. I would condemn any local authority that sought to bludgeon school boards or parents into changing their attitude to these important matters.

But we have not shifted policy in any degree in the amendments that we are bringing forward today. We are bringing forward a refinement and a clarification of policy rather than any new departure. In considering the Lords amendments, we shall not be asking the House to consider any new policy. The underlying policy has been thoroughly debated and settled in both Houses, and we are not here to reopen that debate.

I shall, if I may, refer to the other significant amendments more briefly to demonstrate my general point. There are amendments clarifying the significance of the ballot result. Let me again briefly quote my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State on Second Reading:

"the ballot does not itself decide the question of opting out; it simply determines whether the process can reach the next stage."

My right hon. Friend went on to point out that, as Secretary of State, he

"would of course take into account the proportion who had voted in a ballot . . . but I think it right to give most weight to the views of those who have chosen to exercise their vote either for or against the proposal."—*[Official Report,* 6 March 1989; Vol. 148. c. 631.]

Simply in order to reach a reasonable decision, the Secretary of State will have to take account of all the information available to him about the situation of the school, and the ballot result is one—but only one—of the relevant factors. An amendment which the Government accepted in the other place gives effect to that.

There is also an amendment which gives effect to the policy that the Government had already declared, that a self-governing school should not be able, as a rule, to move to any change in its basic characteristics until it has been established as a self-governing school for at least five years. There is also an amendment which responds to an undertaking given to the Opposition in Committee to entrench a parental majority on the board of management of a self-governing school. In Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling welcomed the Opposition's conversion to that concept, and we have sought to give effect to their concern.

But all this is well-trodden ground. There are other aspects of the provisions on self-governing schools to which the critics have not given a great deal of attention. They have painted a picture of the self-governing school which would not be borne out by any dispassionate scrutiny of the Bill. The self-governing school has been portrayed as some kind of private enclave for a coterie of parents. But it is difficult to see how that is to be squared with the requirement on those parents to obtain mass support in a ballot, after a campaign which will extend

over several weeks and will be conducted with maximum publicity. Even if such groups do exist, they may be disappointed by the reality of the legislation.

We have made it clear, and the Bill makes it clear, that a school must continue to be just as much a public and community asset after it becomes self-governing as it was before. Boards of management will be under a specific statutory duty, for example, to promote the use of the school premises and facilities by the community.

It is also appropriate for me to refer here briefly to the other parts of the Bill. Part II, which was the subject of extensive consultation and discussion beforehand, has been found largely acceptable to both Houses. We have had some debates on some aspects of part III, but in the end those provisions have been accepted with little amendment.

We have now had two years of legislative innovation in Scottish education. That has produced a great deal of new material and new ideas for those involved in the education system to digest. The period that lies ahead must necessarily be one of consolidation, and I do not mean by that that it will be a period of rest or retrenchment, and certainly not of stagnation. I hope that it will be a time of positive and co-operative effort to take up and to put into practice the new developments made possible by the legislation.

There is common ground between the Government and local authorities on many things—on school boards, on development in the curriculum for the five to 14 age group, on the professional development of teachers, and on the management of schools and further education. I hope that we shall be able to work together vigorously on those things. The expeditious passage of the Bill's remaining stages will clear the way and set the scene for that to begin.

4.8 pm

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): I thank the Minister for his welcome and, in turn, welcome him to his first debate as Minister with responsibility for Scottish education. On the surface, his rather winsome smile is preferable to the sneering and snarling that we have had for the past two years from his predecessor, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). He has now gone off to work with endangered species, which is rather akin to herding together the remaining Tory Members of Parliament in Scotland, letting in a rabid dog and throwing away the key.

The Minister comes to us fresh from his triumphs in electricity privatisation. It is difficult to imagine how someone so mild and inoffensive could cause such carnage: the present chaos in the electricity industry follows his early triumph with the poll tax. From poll tax to nuclear tax! Scottish education and Scottish enterprise had better watch out, for this man is the Frank Spencer of the Tory Front Bench, creating chaos wherever he goes.

I am new to the debates on this Bill—even newer than *Hansard* suggests. As we know, its records are impeccable, and it was therefore with some amazement that I read that I had contributed to the Report stage debate on 20 June. That would have been difficult, as I was in Washington with the Select Committee on Home Affairs at the time. Having read the record of the debates on the Bill on the Floor of the House and in Committee, however, I can only pay tribute to the work of those who, unlike myself, are not new to it—the battle-scarred troops behind me, and the noble Lords Carmichael and Macaulay.

Opposition Members will resist the guillotine motion and fight the Bill to the last, because it was forged in dishonesty, and dishonesty remains its central characteristic. The Secretary of State stated explicitly at the time of the 1987 election that opting out would not apply in Scotland. He may have meant what he said then; that was before the Prime Minister and the hon. Member for Stirling got to him. That is the trouble with having a bendy toy as Secretary of State: he puts himself and his career before Scottish education. He should have stood up and fought. Now his career is stuck; he is unhappy, marooned, shell-shocked and becalmed. More important, the Scottish people have been deceived. A Bill that has not even the flimsiest of Scottish mandates is poised to become law, simply because the Prime Minister imposed it on a half-hearted Secretary of State.

What is the purpose of the Secretary of State for Scotland if it is not to build on the roots of Scottish education, developing a policy based on Scottish culture and distinctiveness? The Bill merits longer debate because it is fundamental to Scottish education.

How do I square that belief with the knowledge that there is almost no desire for the Bill in Scotland? Let me explain. The same conflict exists in what the Tories are saying. According to the hon. Member for Stirling when he was responsible for education:

> "It is the most radical change in Scottish education for a generation or more, and I freely admit that. Its potential is profound and the benefits it offers are obvious to some already. In time, they will be widely recognised . . . people . . . will realise that they have a tool with which to reshape Scottish education to the great benefit of its users."—*[Official Report*, 6 March 1989; Vol. 148, c. 701.]

The present Minister responsible for education said on Sunday, in a television programme:

> "I actually don't think that opting out is going to be something that the vast majority of Scottish schools is going to get involved in. I would expect that relatively few will decide to opt out."

There is considerable conflict between those two statements. On the one hand, this is

> "the most radical change . . . for a generation or more".

I interpret that as meaning 30 or more years. On the other hand, we are told, "Let us not bother about this; it will affect only a few schools." Who is right? The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State is right, because the Bill gives the Secretary of State overwhelming powers over the development of Scottish education.

The major issue of contention in Scottish education is school closure: too few pupils and too many places. That issue must be faced by any responsible authority. The Bill gives to the Secretary of State the power to say which schools will close and which will stay open. We know how the Secretary of State will use that power. The Bill sounds the death knell for schools in areas that are struggling to provide a good education for their children. It makes sick the idea that the Secretary of State cares about deprived areas. It is one more kick in the teeth for local government after the poll tax. It removes from education authorities the ability to look at schools as a whole. Councillors will have to face the electorate and explain what is happening, but the power will be hidden away in St. Andrew's house.

There is not the slightest doubt that this is an attempt to bring back selection, despite the Secretary of State having said on Second Reading:

[Mr. Tony Worthington]

"I can state categorically and without equivocation that the Bill is not designed to reintroduce selectivity".—[*Official Report*, 6 March 1989; Vol. 148, c. 625.]

I give to that all the weight that I would give to the statements of a salesman of very used cars.

In contrast, once again I believe what was said by the hon. Member for Stirling in *The Scotsman* on 6 April:

"We are not prepared to rule out selection entirely."

That is what is behind the Bill.

I have read all the Committee's deliberations. The Under-Secretary of State could never bring himself in Committee to say anything good about comprehensive education. He was scornful of any academic research that showed that there had been real progress since the introduction of comprehensive education. For two years as an education Minister he sneered at the state system, thus depriving it of good morale. He said, "I do not think that the state system is any good and I am going to introduce a Bill to break up the system."

The Bill is, I believe, designed to break up the comprehensive system because of the sort of material that appeared this week in *The Sunday Times* under the heading:

"Grammar schools to make a comeback after 20 years."

The article states clearly—after, I suggest, a leak from the Department of Education and Science—

"The first new grammar schools in Britain since the comprehensive revolution began in the 1960-s will be created under plans to be revealed later this month."

What is planned will be spread over the border by the Under-Secretary of State.

In Committee there was much talk about choice, but the Opposition believe that the introduction of comprehensive education gave parents and children more choice than they had ever had before. We should like more comprehensive schools in order to give more choice. We should like comprehensive nursery schools to be provided. We should like more comprehensive training and more comprehensive adult education. That would provide choice. The Opposition believe that comprehensive schools can add on options by means of links with colleges and links between schools.

In itself, the term "comprehensive" is a misnomer. No school can ever be totally comprehensive in terms of subject, catchment area and age. There is always a compromise—about special schools, special gifts or list D schools. However, there comes a legitimate point when we have to say that we must hang on to the central core and idea of the comprehensive. It is impossible to have unfettered choice for some without denying choice to the great majority. At some point it must be said that the exercise of choice for some people is the denial of choice for others, and the good of the great majority is harmed by the choice of others, which is sometimes misguided. That is what happened in the past to senior and junior secondary schools where some people's ability was rewarded. The Minister uses choice as a means of breaking up the comprehensive system.

I am willing to abide by the choice of the Scottish people. I am willing to travel the length and breadth of Scotland with the Minister asking Scottish parents whether they want a development of the Scottish comprehensive or of opted-out schools. I am willing to submit to any objective poll on the development of comprehensives against his plan. Scottish parents would overwhelmingly choose to support comprehensive education. Because the Government are seeking to deny Scottish people that choice, we totally reject the Bill. The Government know that there is no support for it. Because their proposals are anti-choice, anti-local government, centralised and imposed from outside, we should resist the guillotine motion, and the Labour Government of 1991 will repeal the Act.

8.20 pm

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): I add my personal welcome to the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) in his new elevated position, and express the hope that he enjoys it as much as the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) did.

The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie has made previous speeches on this subject, although he was not on the Committee considering the Bill; the matter was raised in discussions on the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988 and the hon. Gentleman was on that Committee. In a famous reference, he suggested that the possibility of opting out for the Neilston primary school in my constituency because of a dispute over a possible extension to that school. The hon. Gentleman said that it would be disgraceful if Neilston received the extra allocation for that extension. I am always in the business of doing little acts of kindness for Opposition Members and it seemed to me that those sentiments should have a wider audience. He will be delighted to know that I quoted him in full to a mass meeting of the parents at Neilston primary school. He also attacked Paisley grammar school on the basis of spurious comparisons with schools in part of my constituency from which no one ever goes to Paisley grammar.

Unlike the hon. Gentleman, I am a product of the Scottish comprehensive system and the allegation that the Bill is about breaking up the state system is wholly erroneous. Schools are not opting out of the state system; technically, they are opting into the state system from a local authority system.

The hon. Gentleman's remarks about choice could apply equally to the parents' charter. I am glad, that in his first speech as Opposition spokesman on Scottish education, the hon. Gentleman has stated that his party is against the parents' charter.

Much of the debate in Committee was about the relationship between school boards and self-governing schools. There is need for an orderly debate for many reasons. One is to enable the hon. Gentleman to make his position clear about some of the issues raised in Committee, such as the famous Strathclyde report. The hon. Member for Fife, Central said:

"I very much welcome this excellent report",

but it was not welcomed by every regional councillor in Strathclyde. One councillor said:

"I am dismayed at what has come out here."

The Educational Institute of Scotland accused Councillor Charles Gray, the leader of the council, of working hand in hand with the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth). In turn, Mr. Charles Gray called the Strathclyde EIS officials "educated ostriches who did not represent the rank and file of teachers or the Labour movement".

Now the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie owes it to the House, the EIS and Mr. Charles Gray to tell us on which side of that argument he is, and I hope that he will have the opportunity to do so during the debate.

It is essential that the supplementary guillotine motion is agreed to get the Bill on the statute book, because the House is due to prorogue on Thursday, subject to satisfactory progress on business. Without the guillotine, satisfactory progress will not be made and the House will be treated to a repetition of what happened in Committee. The House should not be reassured by the fact that the amendments are mainly technical. In Committee, important clauses such as clause 15 on ballots hurtled through in 15 minutes, while technical clauses took hours. My hon. Friends who served on the Committee will recall clause 28 and that an undertaking was given by the Opposition that it would be delivered at midday on 25 April. It was delayed into the middle of the night, not because of a dispute with the Government but because Labour Members discovered that their amendments did not mean what they thought. Instead of admitting that and getting on with the debate, they continued into the middle of the night.

We should not believe that the guillotine is unnecessary because the Opposition are likely to accept the Lords amendments. That offers no reassurance of a short debate. In Committee, in the middle of the night, the hon. Member for Fife, Central moved an amendment. My hon. Friend the Minister intervened. Did he say "I shall consider this amendment"? No, he did not. Did he say, "This is a good amendment, but it is technically defective"? No, he did not. He said:

> "I am happy to accept the hon. Gentleman's amendment, so perhaps we can move on".

Move on we did not; Labour Members continued to talk about the amendment. Eventually, the Chairman said:

> "I am in the Committee's hands, but I find it difficult to understand why amendment No. 154 cannot be dealt with quickly".—[*Official Report, First Scottish Standing Committee*, 25 April 1989; c. 1005-6.]

What happened? Labour Members went on, despite the fact that they had received a kindly warning from the Chairman and despite the fact that the Minister had accepted the amendment, which nobody had opposed.

The same happened when I moved an uncontroversial amendment that was suggested by the Scottish Consumer Council. The Opposition indicated support in principle for it, the Minister said that he would consider it and I said that I was content, but the Opposition, not unreasonably, said that they were not content. They wanted an absolute commitment from the Minister. The Minister was persuaded and said, "I shall accept the amendment," but what happened? Opposition Members went on and on.

Hon. Members may believe that the guillotine is not necessary because Labour Members will want to get home for the break, because they are reasonable people or because, given a free rein, they might run out of steam. The House should dismiss that notion. When Labour Members run out of steam, they will bring on, with the skirl of the pipes and choruses of gaelic songs, their ultimate weapon —the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald). He persuaded the Committee of his considerable ability to speak at enormous length—obviously within order—about almost anything. Not only did he refine that technique but he introduced a new technique—the silent filibuster. He stood up, but said absolutely nothing. He was firmly and fairly brought to order by the Chairman, who said:

> "Order. Let us be clear. The hon. Member must not stand without speaking, because it cannot be recorded in *Hansard*. It cannot be said that during the day, the hon. Member has shown a lack of words, but, if he has now run out of words, we may make progress."—[*Official Report, First Scottish Standing Committee*, 21 March 1989; *c. 250.*]

The events in Committee show why the guillotine is necessary.

The Bill is important. The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie referred to the fact that it was not in the last Conservative party manifesto. It was not in the Eastwood manifesto either, but that was before the closure of Paisley grammar and the Catholic girls' school; fundamental questions were raised about the motives behind those closures in Strathclyde. Having said that, I entirely agree with the hon. Gentleman that it is difficult to put any closure programme into effect and that Strathclyde was justified in trying to grasp these nettles.

The Bill is important not only because it gives Scottish parents the opportunities of choice but because it reassures them that they have an alternative. I believe that it will be to the great benefit of Scottish parents. I fully support the supplementary guillotine.

4.30 pm

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): I offer my congratulations to the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) on his first appearance at the Dispatch Box.

This is no ordinary Bill. It is being forced to a conclusion with the use of the guillotine. Any Government who use this procedure should have proved their case overwhelmingly. That the Government have not done so is obvious. By introducing the guillotine, the Government demonstrate, once again, their disregard for the views of the Scottish people.

The Government have repeated their earlier guillotine on Report to stifle proper debate on issues of great importance to Scottish parents, pupils and teachers. The Minister said that the Bill had had a good airing, but the amendments come from the other place and are being rushed through. We should have proper time to discuss them because the Bill is opposed by the majority of people in Scotland. At no time did the Government tell us that they would introduce these measures.

We need more time to discuss how boards of management will take account of the needs and interests of the local community. We need more time to ensure that the future status of schools is not determined by a small, unrepresentative clique of parents who are singlemindedly determined to pursue their own narrow aims. We need more time to ensure that the basic characteristics of a school in regard to admissions policy cannot be changed without the express consent of the majority of the parents in the school and after a period of thorough reflection and democratic consultation. We need more time to ensure that the Secretary of State does not abdicate his responsibility for maintaining an integrated education system.

The Government have not been able to show how schools stand to gain by becoming self-governing. Will it mean a better building, a new school, playing fields or more books or equipment? No one can give us an answer. On the contrary, the key point is that funding for

[Mrs. Ray Michie]

opted-out schools will not mean extra money. The money will be deducted from the grant that the local education authority would otherwise receive for the school.

The Government may have little regard for the effect of their proposed changes, but I assure them and those on the fringes of the Scottish Tory establishment that they matter greatly to people who depend on basic education provision and who value a service that is available to all. In rural areas such as Argyll, the threat is apparent: there are already cuts and closures. Without a basic framework of schools run for the benefit of the entire community, rural communities may find it difficult to survive. Contrary to the Government's protestations, parents in rural areas do not have a choice of school to which to send their children.

Once again, we have a guillotine motion on Scottish legislation. Last night, on the car radio, I heard about the glitter, pomp and ceremony of the Lord Mayor's banquet. I heard the Prime Minister's words ringing out—about freedom to choose, human rights, the spread of liberty and genuine democracy. That has a hollow and hypocritical ring in the ears of the Scots, who have chosen to look after their own affairs, but are debarred from doing so by the Government.

Today we are not allowed to debate the Lord amendments properly. That is a telling sign of the Government's attitude towards the distinctiveness of the Scottish way of life which, in the words of a Welshman, Sir Alwyn Williams,

"stems from an education system of historic merit".

The Government continue to treat the Scottish nation with contempt.

4.35 pm

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): I welcome the hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) to his new responsibilities. Those of us who served on the Standing Committee enjoyed the company of the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish). Whether he enjoyed our company as much is a moot point. Perhaps it was due to the effectiveness of the contribution of English Members that the Scottish Labour party decided to promote an Englishman to be their spokesman—I know not—but I welcome the hon. Gentleman to his new responsibilities.

The debate is supposed to be about the guillotine motion. I consider that a guillotine is necessary. I read in the newspapers this week that the Labour party is putting it about that the Government's programme is "in a shambles". If it is necessary for the Government to impose a guillotine this late in the Session, it is simply because the Labour party Chief Whip has lost control of his own troops. For night after night during the past two weeks, small groups of Labour Members who represent mining constituencies have kept the House up late. Their speeches have been in order, but I doubt whether their contribution has been more effective than that of the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald)—the silent filibuster which we heard of earlier.

I have no doubt that with such highly controversial legislation—there cannot be an item of legislation on which there is a sharper political divide—all sensible hon. Members must hold the view that an early timetable motion for all stages of the Bill should be imposed.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): The hon. Gentleman seems to be labouring under a delusion. He says that this is a highly controversial Bill, but there is no controversy about it in Scotland—the area to which it applies. There is no detectable support for the Bill in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman should get that clear in his head.

Mr. Leigh: This is an enabling Bill. If the hon. Gentleman is right to say that there is no detectable support for it, presumably no schools will opt out of local authority control.

On three occasions I have put the question to the hon. Member for Fife, Central and on no occasion was he prepared to answer me. My hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, did me the great honour of thereafter referring to it as the Gainsborough question, and it remains unanswered. If this is such a controversial item of legislation that there is no support for it, why is the Scottish Labour party worried about it? Presumably no schools will opt out. The English experience has some relevance and value and it proves that the case is otherwise, as I shall show in a moment.

In legislation where there is a sharp political divide, it must be right to timetable early. I doubt whether anything new was said after the first 20 to 30 hours of debate in the Standing Committee. Labour Members on that Committee had to prove to their paymasters in the Scottish teaching unions that they were a robust and powerful Opposition, keeping the Tories up all night, and similar rubbish. Is there a single hon. Gentleman who has had——

Mrs. Ray Mitchie: Or hon. Lady.

Mr. Leigh: Is there a single hon. Gentleman or hon. Lady who has received a letter of complaint about the guillotine motion imposed this week? I doubt it. People outside care about the arguments and the issues, but they do not care about Conservative and Labour Members staying up all night engaging in filibusters and procedural debates.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The hon. Gentleman referred to the Labour party's paymasters in the Scottish teaching unions. The teaching unions have been careful to obtain cross-party support for their stance. Can the hon. Gentleman name one that is affiliated or pays money to the Labour party?

Mr. Leigh: I shall deal with the Educational Institute of Scotland in a moment. I hope that the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) will give me some credit for having sat with my hon. Friends through discussions on the Bill for over 100 hours and for knowing, therefore, something about what has been said on these matters by the Scottish teachers' unions. I shall deal with that in a moment.

I said that after the first 20 hours of debate, nothing new came out, but perhaps I was wrong. There was a perceptible shifting in the Labour party's position on these matters. Labour Members started by saying, as they have said this afternoon—the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) repeated the point—that there is no support for the proposals. When the original proposal for school boards was published, the Scottish Labour party opposed it. From the results in Scotland, one can see

that two thirds of schools, 70 per cent. of pupils and 80 per cent. of secondary schools will have school boards. Turnout in most areas was more than 55 per cent., which is higher than the turnout for most regional council elections, although those councils run education at present.

We can see, therefore, just as we saw in the debate on school boards, that we shall start to win the argument on the ground as the debate continues. If the hon. Member for East Lothian is right in saying that there is no support for the principle of opting out in Scotland, I must refer him to the English experience. Sixty-nine schools have been balloted and no fewer than 50 have opted out. That shows that, contrary to what the hon. Gentleman said, there is considerable support for the principle of opting out.

Other interesting developments have taken place in recent months. The first national survey of parents' views on education was carried out in Scotland, having been commissioned by the Scottish Office. There were some interesting results which confirm all that my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling has managed to achieve in his two years in office and Conservative Members congratulate my hon. Friend on all his work for Scottish education. The results are grim reading for the Scottish Labour party because they show that parents support choice of schools, firm discipline, testing, school uniforms, school prize givings and competitions, the regular appraisal of teachers, giving parents a say in what is taught and, to a lesser extent, how it is taught, giving parents some say in how the school budget is spent and more parental involvement through voluntary help in schools.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) said earlier, Strathclyde made an about-turn on the matter halfway through our deliberations, much to the chagrin of the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish). On 17 April, Strathclyde published a report saying that schools and colleges should have far more control over their own affairs, especially in handling their own budgets. It said that a slimmed-down Glasgow headquarters would deal only with future strategy, while the region's six divisions would handle operations in co-operation with local schools and colleges.

Our delight with what we heard was so great that my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) suggested that the leader of Strathclyde regional council, Charles Gray, should be given a knighthood. Indeed, he was referred to in our deliberations as "Sir Charles Gray". The hon. Member for Fife, Central was rather surprised by the about-turn by Strathclyde, which undermined all his efforts and everything he had said in the first 10, 20, 30 or 50 hours of our debate. He was forced to say in the *Glasgow Herald* on 21 April 1989:

"I very much welcome this excellent report",

although he said that the timing did "quite surprise" him. I am not surprised at that, because his position had been wholly undermined.

As the debate progressed over many hours, we saw that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary had got it right and that he was in tune with what Scotland, Strathclyde and the parents whose views were reported in the survey wanted. Is it not sad that the Labour party has learnt nothing? It published a policy review which has had universally bad treatment by the press. Even *The Independent* said that the Labour party

"is still influenced by the Fabian approach, under which things are done to people in their best interests, quote, independently of what they want themselves . . . Labour really isn't learning."

We are not the party which forces education policies down the throats of parents. We want to give parents initiative and choice.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: Is it not the case that the Labour party's policy is best summed up by its former education spokesman, the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) who said that what was good enough for his children was good enough for everybody else's?

Mr. Leigh: That is a disgraceful remark, typical of the old-fashioned Labour party that those of us fighting it have grown to know, love and beat in three successive general elections—and in a fourth one as well, no doubt. *[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is coming to a conclusion. This is a short debate.

Mr. Leigh: I am coming to a conclusion, but I cannot leave the hon. Member for Fife, Central alone without quoting him once more. On 23 February he wrote:

"we have failed to properly develop the desires of parents to be more involved in their children's education; and we have failed to embrace the real and changing needs of education into a radical and imaginative agenda."

The words of the then Labour party spokesman are the words of a man who realises that his policies have failed. It is my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary and his successor who are now in tune with the wishes of Scottish parents.

4.46 pm

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): There is little to which we should heed in the remarks of the hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh), given that he knows little about anything that happens in Scotland, even to the extent that he assumes that the Conservative party has won three successive general elections there. I ask him to go away qietly and look at the Scottish election results in 1979, 1983 and 1987—during which time the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), has had quite a lot to say in Scottish politics—and he will see that the Conservative party has been rejected decisively by the Scottish people, as have the policies that it attempted to push through the House with the support of English Members who know nothing about the issues that are being debated in Scottish education.

The hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle said that, after 20 hours of discussion in Committee, little new was introduced into the debate. I ask him to consider the contribution of the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart). He seemed to be highly entertained by his hon. Friend's speech, although it was the same speech that he made on 3 May 1989—six months ago—even down to the same quotation from the *Official Report* of the first Scottish Standing Committee on 21 March 1989. Any hon. Member who doubts that need only to look up *Hansard* of 3 May at column 251, and he will see the same speech that the hon. Gentleman rendered this afternoon. If ever there was an example of the poverty of the contribution made to politics in Scotland by the Conservative party, we have seen it this afternoon in the contribution of the hon. Member for Eastwood.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): If the hon. Gentleman and the Labour party are at all interested in debating the amendments, what on earth is the point of that idiotic speech?

Mr. McAllion: The hon. and learned Gentleman obviously does not know what debate this is. We are debating a guillotine motion and there are no amendments for the House to consider. The hon. and learned Gentleman would do well to go back to where he came from, where he would probably find the atmosphere far more congenial.

The Labour party will continue to resist the Bill and the guillotine motion, as we have done throughout the proceedings on the Bill. We do so all the more because the political context in which the measure is being assessed has changed dramatically since the Bill was previously considered by the House. That change has important implications for the way in which its provisions are likely to be implemented in Scotland—if the Bill is ever allowed on to the statute book.

The provisions in the Bill are potentially radical. No one should make any mistake about that. We are considering giving individual schools in Scotland the opportunity to opt out of their education authority's control. For the first time for generations, and certainly in my life, we could see deep divisions in the provision of primary and secondary education. There is also the prospect of the return of academic selection for entry into local neighbourhood schools. Pupils could be denied the right to attend the school at the end of their street on the grounds that they are too dim. It was clear from the speeches of the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) and English Members in Committee that the spectre will be raised of doors being slammed on Scottish pupils on the grounds of their ethnic origin, sex or religious belief. Conservative Members made it clear that they wanted single-sex schools, Muslim schools and schools dominated by a particular religious ethos to the exclusion of any other.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Will the hon. Gentleman explain why he believes that Catholics should have the right to separate education but that Jews and Muslims should not?

Mr. McAllion: The hon. Gentleman is not even aware of the changes to be made by the Government. Anyone will be able to gain entry to a Catholic school but will not have to attend any religious classes. That is not the case now. In Committee, the hon. Gentleman suggested that that should be the case in schools which opt out. That is what he and his hon. Friends have sought in supporting the Bill.

The Bill paves the way for the privatisation of further education colleges in Scotland by setting up private companies to manage them. In the process it dismantles the existing structure of pay and conditions for staff. It also establishes technology academies, based on the principle of creaming off the best and brightest pupils from Scottish education, and concentrates an unfair proportion of available resources on them. It reintroduces compulsory national testing into primary schools, which implies branding pupils as either successes or failures at seven and 11. The Bill introduces teacher appraisal, not as a means of strengthening career structures but to allow boards of management to weed out teachers whose faces do not fit —perhaps teachers who represent the EIS, progressive teachers or those who put the needs of pupils before the prejudices of a minority of parents who dominate the board.

Conservative and Opposition Members agree that the provisions in the Bill are radical. Our disagreement is on their desirability. Are the changes necessary, given the state of Scottish education? The answer is no. I tabled a question to the Secretary of State for Scotland about capital spending on primary and secondary schools in Scotland in the past 10 years. The answer provided by the Minister of State, Scottish Office was that this year, the Government have spent about half as much on schools in Scotland as the Labour Government spent in 1978-79. At current prices the Labour Government spent £108 million on primary and secondary schools in 1978-79 whereas this Government are likely to spend £57 million in 1988-89. What is necessary for education in Scotland is that the Government release resources to improve school buildings. The introduction of divisive and offensive measures which nobody in Scotland wants is unnecessary.

Are the measures in the Bill popular in Scotland? The answer is overwhelmingly no. At St. John's primary school in Alva, parents had themselves elected to the school board with the explicit intention of preventing any changes from being introduced through the medium of the school board. Some parents might have wanted the school to opt out of local authority control.

The evidence that we are considering is not only anecdotal. In the time that has elapsed since we previously discussed the Bill in Committee and on Report, huge press interest has been excited in Scotland about our consideration of the Bill. On occasions, the Committee proceedings seemed more like rival press briefings to put the message across in Scotland than serious examination of the Bill. Both sides were guilty of that. No one can deny that Scottish people are aware of the measures in the Bill.

Subsequently, there have been elections to school boards. They have focused parental interest on the Government's attempt to change education in Scotland. Since then, the previous Secretary of State for Education and Science has been elevated to the chairmanship of the Tory party, which, as he would argue, could mean an increase in Tory party campaigning in Scotland to put the Conservative message across. It is undeniable that the message is getting across to the people of Scotland. They have received it and they understand it——

It being one hour after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question necessary for the disposal of them, pursuant to the Order [3 May].*

The House divided: Ayes 266, Noes 198.

Division No. 406] **[4.58 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert	Baldry, Tony
Aitken, Jonathan	Batiste, Spencer
Alexander, Richard	Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Alison, Rt Hon Michael	Bellingham, Henry
Amery, Rt Hon Julian	Bendall, Vivian
Amess, David	Bevan, David Gilroy
Amos, Alan	Biffen, Rt Hon John
Arbuthnot, James	Blackburn, Dr John G.
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Ashby, David	Body, Sir Richard
Aspinwall, Jack	Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Atkins, Robert	Boscawen, Hon Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*	Boswell, Tim
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Bottomley, Mrs Virginia

Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Key, Robert
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waldegrave, Hon William
Waller, Gary
Walters, Sir Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. John M. Taylor and
Mr. Sydney Chapman.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Rt Hon Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Blair, Tony
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Maria
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*

Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hoey, Ms Kate *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Sillars, Jim
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Order of the House [3rd May] be supplemented as follows:

Lords Amendments

1.—(1) The proceedings on Consideration of the Lords Amendments shall be completed at this day's sitting and shall for the purposes of paragraph 13 of the Order [3rd May] be regarded as proceedings on an allotted day.

(2) The Order in which those proceedings are to be taken shall be Lords Amendment 18, Lords Amendment 25, Lords Amendment 80, Lords Amendment 1, Lords Amendments 66 and 67, Lords Amendment 81, Lords Amendments 83 to 88, Lords Amendment 2, Lords Amendment 40, Lords Amendment 44, Lords Amendment 62, Lords Amendment 65, Lords Amendment 92, Lords Amendments 68 to 78, Lords Amendment 9, Lords Amendment 47, Lords Amendment 52, Lords Amendments 56 to 61, Lords Amendments 63 and 64, Lords Amendment 79, Lords Amendment 91, Lords Amendments 93 and 94, Lords Amendment 3, Lords Amendments 5 to 8, Lords Amendments 11 to 13, Lords Amendments 20 and 21, Lords Amendments 26 to 29, Lords Amendments 48 to 51, Lords Amendments 53 to 55, Lords Amendment 4, Lords Amendment 17, Lords Amendment 39, Lords Amendment 10, Lords Amendments 14 and 15, Lords Amendment 82, Lords Amendments 89 and 90, Lords Amendment 16, Lords Amendment 19, Lords Amendments 22 to 24, Lords Amendments 41 to 43, Lords Amendments 30 to 38, and Lords Amendments 45 and 46.

(3) Subject to the provisions of the Order [3rd May], each part of those proceedings shall, if not previously brought to a conclusion, be brought to a conclusion at the end of such period beginning with the commencement of the proceedings on the Motion for this Order as is of the length specified in the second column of the Table set out below.

TABLE

Proceedings

Lords Amendments	*Length of period*
Nos. 18, 25, 80, 1, 66, 67, 81, 83 to 88, 2, 40, 44, 62, 65, 92, 68 to 78, 9, 47, 52, 56 to 61, 63, 64 79, 91, 93 and 94.	One hour and thirty minutes.
Nos. 3, 5 to 8, 11 to 13, 20, 21, 26 to 29, 48 to 51, 53 to 55, 4, 17, 39, 10, 14, 15, 82, 89, 90, 16, 19, 22 to 24 and 41 to 43.	Two hours.
Nos. 30 to 36.	Two hours and thirty minutes.
Remaining Lords Amendments.	Three hours.

2.—(1) For the purposes of bringing any proceedings to a conclusion in accordance with paragraph 1 above—

(a) Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided and, if that Question is for the amendment of a Lords Amendment, shall then put forthwith the Question on any further Amendment of the said Lords Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown and on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in the said Lords Amendment or, as the case may be, in the said Lords Amendment as amended;

(b) Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining Lords Amendments as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—

(i) put forthwith the Question on any Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown to a Lords Amendment and then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth agree or disagree with the Lords in their Amendment, or as the case may be, in their Amendment as amended;

(ii) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown, That this House doth disagree with the Lords in a Lords Amendment;

(iii) put forthwith with respect to the Amendments designated by Mr. Speaker which have not been disposed of the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendments; and

(iv) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the remaining Lords Amendments;

(c) as soon as the House has agreed or disagreed with the Lords in any of their Amendments Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith a separate Question on any other Amendment moved by a Minister of the Crown relevant to that Lords Amendment.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

Stages subsequent to first Consideration of Lords Amendments

3.—(1) The proceedings on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill shall be brought to a conclusion one hour after the commencement of the proceedings.

(2) For the purpose of bringing those proceedings to a conclusion—

(a) Mr. Speaker shall first put forthwith any Question which has already been proposed from the Chair and not yet decided, and shall then put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown which is related to the Question already proposed from the Chair;

(b) Mr. Speaker shall then designate such of the remaining items in the Lords Message as appear to him to involve questions of Privilege and shall—

(i) put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown on any item;

(ii) in the case of each remaining item designated by Mr. Speaker, put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in their Proposal; and

(iii) put forthwith the Question, That this House doth agree with the Lords in all the remaining Lords Proposals.

Supplemental provisions with respect to certain proceedings

4.—(1) Mr. Speaker shall put forthwith the Question on any Motion made by a Minister of the Crown for the appointment and quorum of a Committee to draw up Reasons.

(2) A Committee appointed to draw up Reasons shall report before the conclusion of the sitting at which it is appointed.

5.—(1) In this paragraph "the proceedings" means proceedings on Consideration of Lords Amendments, on any further Message from the Lords on the Bill, on the appointment and quorum of a Committee to draw up Reasons and on the Report of such a Committee.

(2) Paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(3) No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, the proceedings shall be made except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

(4) If the proceedings are interrupted by a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), the bringing to a conclusion of any part of the proceedings which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I should like to put it on record that we are left with 15 minutes in which to consider 40 amendments to this important legislation. When he opened the debate, the Minister said that many of these amendments are technical, but the first group that we are about to debate contains some significant ones, including those relating to special needs. The system does not allow Members of Parliament representing Scottish constituencies adequate time in which to debate these vital issues. I want that clearly on the record. I ask you whether there is any way in which we can remedy this ridiculous situation.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Let me answer the last point first. There is no way in which I can make any alterations. I am bound by the resolutions of the House. Secondly, the hon. Lady is correct to say that we had very little time. These points of order are taking time from these important amendments.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Within the rules of the House, how is it possible for us to make an adequate protest against the fact that Scottish National party members were deliberately kept off the Committee considering this Bill, and that even the SNP Member who did serve on the Committee, my hon. Friend the Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing), was not allowed to participate in the guillotine debate? Ours was the only party not allowed to participate in the debate—not because we do not want to, but because the House does not allow us in.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No hon. Member is being deliberately kept off, and the hon. Gentleman is wasting the time of the House when we should be moving on to consider important amendments.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is it in order to ask whether this contemptuous treatment of Scottish business and the debating of such important amendments in such a ridiculously short time was agreed through the usual channels?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The House has come to a conclusion on this resolution. At this stage, that cannot be changed.

Orders of the Day

Self-Governing Schools etc. (Scotland) Bill

Lords amendments considered.

Clause 1

DUTY OF SECRETARY OF STATE TO MAINTAIN SELF-GOVERNING SCHOOLS

Lords amendment: No. 18, in page 9, line 32, leave out "this section" and insert—

"section 19(2) of this Act;

(aa) having regard to paragraphs 2 to 4 of Part I of Schedule 1 to this Act, specify the respective numbers of parent members, staff members and appointed members who it is proposed should (with the person for the time being head teacher) constitute the board of management which succeeds the interim board of management;"

5.11 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos 25 and 80.

Mr. Lang: I can tell the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) that the Opposition said at an early stage in the Committee that they were looking to spending 120 to 130 hours debating the Bill, but we have spent about 160 hours doing so. It is not the fault of Her Majesty's Government that the Bill has not been scrutinised in full detail in all its clauses.

All these amendments deal with the principle of ensuring a majority of elected parents on the board of management. There is a little history to amendment No. 80, which I shall need to explain to the House. However, so as not to keep the House in suspense, I shall reveal the end of the story straight away: this amendment was introduced by the Government in direct response to pressure from the Opposition.

The Bill as it was when first introduced provided that, when a school became self-governing, the board of management should have the same number of parent and staff members as has the school board; that the head teacher was to become a full member and there was to be an increase in the number of appointed members. That meant that the parents would have lost their overall majority.

It was quite clear in Standing Committee that there was a will on all sides to preserve the parental majority as it will be on school boards. Indeed the Opposition moved an amendment to that effect. In response to that, my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) undertook in Committee to consider whether boards of management should have an in-built parental majority, just as school boards will have. He also undertook to reconsider the provisions for the term of office of appointed members, a point on which the Committee did in fact make some amendment to the Bill. Amendments were made on Report reflecting the outcome of our reconsideration of these matters; and since there was no opportunity to explain them at the time, I think it will help the House if I do so now. They provide the necessary context for the understanding of this group of amendments.

Although we needed little persuasion that there should be a parental majority, we do also attach importance to the provision that a board of management should have some increase over the school board in its outside representation. A board of management will have greater responsibilities than any school board can have; and it is likely to want to call on a wider range of experience among its members. However, if we increase the number of outside members and still want to have a parental majority there obviously has to be provision for an increase in parent members. That would be necessary in any case because the head teacher becomes a full member of the board of management, and that in itself would remove the parental majority.

Then a question arises. If extra places have to be filled by election, when will be the most convenient time to hold the election? Should one hold it during the run-up to self-governing status, or immediately after? This led us into a further consideration. If elections are going to have to be held in any case, it seemed to us that, for wider reasons, it would make sense simply to have new elections for the whole board. The change from being a school board to being a board of management is a considerable one, and individuals who may have been happy to serve on a school board, and even to support a proposal for self-governing status, will not necessarily want personally to take on the extra commitment and responsibility involved in serving on the board of management of a self-governing school.

It might also seem logical to get this new board elected and put in place as soon as possible after the decision has been taken that the school is to become self-governing. However we concluded on balance that this might complicate the transitional period unduly. There will be much to do for the management of any school during that period, in taking over from the education authority and preparing for the assumption of full responsibility, and it would be better not to add to that by a requirement to conduct elections and hand over to a new board.

Therefore, we concluded that the best and most convenient option will be to have the school board continue unchanged right through to the point where the school becomes self-governing. At that point, the school board will be incorporated as an interim board of management, and its duty will be to conduct elections to the board of management proper as quickly as possible and then to hand over to the newly elected board, whose members will in turn select the appointed members of that board. The board of management will thus be, in its composition, a slightly expanded school board.

That is the gist of the amendments which we tabled for Report and which were incoporated into the Bill as it left this House. Among them was this one which now appears as amendment No. 80 in today's list. It is the key amendment which discharges my hon. Friend's undertaking. However it was omitted by printer's error from the Notice Paper on the day of the Report debate, although it had been tabled and had appeared on the Notice Paper for the previous day. It was necessary therefore to table it again in another place, and that is how it comes to appear today as amendment No. 80.

I should have liked to explain to the House in more detail the implications of Lords amendments Nos. 80 and 25, but as the time for consideration is short, it would be sensible for me to finish——

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lang: I would rather not, because I am trying to save the time of the House. It would be sensible if I brought my remarks to an end.

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing): this is ridiculous. Ignorant comments from the hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) on Scottish education only exacerbate an already bad situation and increase the frustrations that the Opposition feel.

We are pleased that the Minister has taken the point that we made in Committee about the parental majority. He is right to say that we made that point. When the School Boards (Scotland) Act 1988 was going through its stages in the House, we were against parental majority. We are for it under the provisions of this Bill, for the simple reason that schools dealt with under the School Boards (Scotland) Act still retain a link with the local authority, whereas for the schools dealt with in this Bill, that link is destroyed. For that reason, we think that a parental majority will enhance the democratic process of governing the schools.

The Government have not adequately answered the question of what constitutes the community and what constitutes the appointed members. As it stood, the number of community members or parents could be overruled by appointed members. We are concerned about the wishes of parents. During the recess, I visited every primary and secondary school and spoke to the parents of children in almost every one of those schools. I got the message that there was not much interest in the Bill's provisions. I told these parents that the Government were interested in doing their business by stealth. They have a public agenda and a private agenda: the public one says that they are interested in parents, while the private one sets out their naked ideological objectives.

If the Government were interested in parents, they would have consulted parents in Scotland. The hallmark of the Bill is the lack of consultation with parents or public representatives. It is sad that the Under-Secretary who was responsible for the Bill has moved on, because he will not get his comeuppance. He has left it in the hands of his friends.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: He will lose his seat.

Mr. McFall: Yes, perhaps he will. He has left the Bill in the hands of the Minister.

I visited Dallas in Texas two years ago and looked at schools there. I was taken round many fine magnet schools. I am sure that the hon. Member for Stirling would say that that is the objective for Scotland. Yes, the schools were good, but that afternoon I also went to see the supervisor or superintendent of education in Dallas and said that it was true that the city had good magnet schools in literature, business and science and so on. However, when I asked him about the attendance figures for Dallas, he said that the official drop-out rate—that is what it is called in America—was 45 per cent., but unofficially the figure was 55 per cent.

That shows that, if the Government go ahead with the Bill and ignore the parental majority, they will be saying that they do not care about the majority of the population, only about the minority. That is what happened in Dallas. That view is underlined in the Government's philosophy towards education and society in general. That is why there has been such an outcry in Scotland against the provisions, and that is why we do not see the Bill as a liberating or enabling measure—that is just a kid-on from Conservative Members—because if anything, it is a centralising Bill.

Ultimately, the Secretary of State has all the aces. In this capacity he is nothing more than a Stalinist, because he is taking exactly—*[Interruption.]* No, I never called the hon. Member for Stirling a Stalinist—I shall leave that to other people—but this is a centralising Bill. The Secretary of State will have all the aces. He will say what each and every school can do. The Secretary of State is showing his naked ideology by looking at Scottish education and saying that, although local authorities may have served their communities well, because they are non-Tory, they will have to go.

Scottish education and the interests of our young people are being sacrificed for those narrow ends. That is the message that we must put across, even at this late stage. It would have been one thing if the Secretary of State and his Ministers had consulted the public, but there has been absolutely no consultation. That is why the Bill will be thoroughly rejected. The only chink of light is that the Secretary of State was good enough—if one can call it that — to retain the parental majority on the board, thus enhancing, or rather keeping some, democracy and community involvement.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Not only do we have the farce of a timetable being forced on Scottish Members of Parliament as a result of the hypocrisy of Conservative Members, but the new Minister at the Scottish Office, who is responsible for education, is not prepared to allow one hon. Member who served at length on the Committee and who spoke at length, moving many amendments—which is more than the Minister did—to intervene to ask a simple and straightforward question.

Mr. Lang *rose*——

Mrs. Ewing: It is only because of that that I have to rise to put that question to him. [HON. MEMBERS: "Give way."] The Minister has spoken at length about the procedures, resolutions and ballots, but I wish to pursue him on the issue to which the Secretary of State gave voice on Report. Will there be encouragement from the Scottish Office for a moratorium between the establishment of a school board and the possible holding of ballots on opting out? The Secretary of State suggested that he would not encourage that procedure in the first one or two years of the establishment of a school board. When the Minister replies, please will he make clear the time scale that we are talking about? Will school boards be able to start that procedure almost immediately, or will there be a moratorium?

Mr. Calum Macdonald (Western Isles): Amendment No. 80, on which the Minister has asked us to focus as the most important in this group, sums up much of the deception underlying the whole Bill. The amendment purports to enhance or to increase democracy in the Bill,

[Mr. Calum Macdonald]

but we know that the Bill is nothing less than a diminution of local democracy and of genuine community control over our schools. As my hon. Friends have said, that is what the Bill is about.

The Minister said that once schools became self-governing—I believe that I am quoting him—they would be "just as much a public and a community asset as before". How can that be when the Government are removing any powers, control or influence that the community may have over such schools when they become self-governing? If there is no community control and no community say, how can the community influence community use of the new self-governing schools?

What is happening is not an enhancement of local democracy, but a reduction in local democracy because communities are being stripped of any democratic outlet or expression that they have over the conduct, future, or fate of self-governing schools.

The bizarre concept underlying the amendment, and, indeed the whole Bill, is that, in some way, the local education authorities do not represent the democratic will of their communities, that they stifle or distort the will of the people and what they want in the schools in their local education authority area. That bizarre concept—that local education authorities are somehow undemocratic but that the new self-governing schools will be democratic—is absolutely bizarre——

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order this day, to put forthwith the Questions necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that hour.*

Lords amendment agreed to.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *then designated Lords amendments Nos. 65 and 94 as appearing to her to involve questions of privilege.*

Lords amendments Nos. 65 and 94 agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Lords amendments Nos. 25, 80, 1, 66, 67, 81, 83 to 88, 2, 40, 44, 62, 92, 68 to 78, 9, 47, 52, 56 to 61, 63, 64, 79, 91, and 93 agreed to.

Clause 13

INITIATION OF PROCEDURE FOR ACQUISITION OF SELF-GOVERNING STATUS

Lords amendment: No. 3, in page 6, line 24, after "board" insert

"(a "first resolution")" to hold such a ballot and confirm that decision by a resolution (a "second resolution") passed at a meeting of the board held not less than twenty-eight days, nor more than forty-two days, after that at which the first resolution was passed".

Mr. Lang: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss Lords amendments Nos. 5 to 8, 11 to 13, 20, 21, 26 to 29, 48 to 51 and 53 to 55.

Mr. Lang: The amendment requires a school board to pass two separate resolutions, the second in confirmation of the first, before it may call a ballot of parents on self-governing status, with a period of between four and six weeks between the two resolutions. The other amendments in this group are all consequential, to deal with references later in the Bill to a resolution of a school board calling a ballot. Immediately on passing the first resolution the board must, under the terms of subsections (6) and (7) of clause 13, inform the education authority and, where the school is a denominational school, the denominational body concerned.

I said something about this amendment in speaking on the timetable motion earlier, and I should like to enlarge on it now. I note that the Opposition moved a rather similar amendment in Standing Committee. They did not develop their reasons for it at the time—indeed, they subsequently withdrew it—and my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), quite properly in the circumstances, dismissed it with a brief explanation of why we did not think it necessary to follow the English legislation in this particular. He stressed the desirability of keeping the opting-out procedure as short as possible, and I think that it has been accepted on all sides that at any rate the procedure should not be unduly drawn out.

A good deal of water has flowed under the bridge since then, however. Immediately after that amendment was disposed of, the Committee moved on to a discussion, which eventually was quite wide ranging, of the whole procedure leading up to a ballot, and particularly about how voters in a ballot should be made aware of the significance of what they would be voting for or against. There were, for example, amendments discussed on the lines that voters should be given a statement of the views of the staff at the school or that they should be given a kind of prospectus by the school board, outlining how the school would be managed, and under what policies, if it became self-governing.

I think that it is fair to say that those debates served to inform everyone's thinking, on both sides of the House and outside Parliament as well. Amendments were made both in Committee and on Report which are relevant to this matter. My hon. Friend accepted an amendment from the Opposition which was designed to guarantee that voters were given the information that they would reasonably require in order to make a decision in the ballot and, in response to points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) we introduced a new clause on report, which is now clause 17, designed to ensure that a local authority cannot use its superior financial resources to swamp the voters with propaganda, and to provide that the school board, if it is so minded, shall have a reasonable sum available to it to promote the case in favour of self-governing status.

5.30 pm

The amendment was tabled by my noble Friend Baroness Carnegy of Lour, with Labour support, in another place and was also seen as relevant to the same general concern when it was discussed in another place. The House may therefore find it helpful if I set the amendment in the context of how we see a ballot being conducted.

It is clear that when a school board decides to call a ballot, the matter will instantly become news. There is no possibility of the ballot being, as it were, conducted by stealth. Obviously the parents must be informed, but even before that, the education authority must be informed as soon as the board's resolution is taken. Likewise, the staff at the school—even if they do not receive a formal

communication from the board, as one would expect them to do—will hear of the decision from their representatives on the board.

Both the education authority and the staff will certainly have views on the matter. They will want to make them known to the board but, even more, they will want to publicise them and communicate them direct to the parent voters. Those actions will occur irrespective of whether we legislate for them. At the same time, the school board will itself almost certainly want to put its case to its constituents. Even if it did not do so, the parents would surely demand to know what their board had in mind.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Perhaps the Minister will now answer the question I asked earlier about a moratorium between the establishment of a school board and the possibility of moving towards opting out.

Mr. Lang: The provisions of the Bill are for no moratorium between the establishment of a school board and the starting of the procedure towards opting out; it can set in motion the procedure, if it thinks it appropriate when it is constituted. But that process, as I have been describing and could describe in greater detail, is likely to take several months before reaching a conclusion.

As I was saying, the school board will almost certainly want to put its case to its constituents. Even if it did not do so, the parents would surely demand to know what their board had in mind. There are provisions under the School Boards (Scotland) Act under which a board is required to communicate with parents as often as seems to be necessary about matters which are its concern; and there is provision also for parents to requisition an open meeting with the board. So the machinery is there.

We plan shortly to issue guidance to school boards, in addition to the general circular which we have already issued in draft, specifically on the details of the procedure for acquiring self-governing status. We shall reinforce there the message that it is desirable that a board should be as open as possible with parents about what it intends. In particular, we shall encourage boards to give parents the opportunity to express their views and discuss the issue at open meetings before the ballot is held. That, we think, is by far the most effective way of ensuring that parents get a chance to understand what is involved when they come to cast their votes.

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for the Minister to address the House when there is not on the Government Benches another Member who represents a Scottish constituency?

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order for the Chair to resolve.

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. My father is a member of the Liverpool Scottish. Will that do?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lang: We believe that the process that I have described is by far the most effective way of ensuring that parents get a chance to understand what is involved when they come to cast their votes.

Mr. McFall: The Minister has spoken at length about consulting parents. The message that I am getting is that, even if parents pass a vote of no confidence in a school board, that board need not take any notice. Until school boards have some accountability, there will be no faith in this legislation.

Mr. Lang: As the proposition about opting out would have to be put to the parents in a ballot, the parents would have an opportunity to express their view clearly and decisively in the context of that process.

In that context, the procedure required by the amendment will be a positive help. It guarantees that, in addition to the period that must elapse between a decision to ballot and the holding of the ballot, there will be at least four weeks' of public debate on the issue. In addition, at the end of that period the board is given an opportunity to reconsider its position, in the light of the feedback that it will have had from the education authority, from the staff at the school and from the parents who elected it. At that point the board will be free to decide whether it still wants to go ahead with a ballot, and it will have to take a positive decision, ratifying the earlier one, if it still means to go ahead.

The amendment will be wholly beneficial to the process from any point of view, and I commend it to the House.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): Like others, I have questions about the balloting of parents. The Minister said that parents would be informed—by methods that have yet to be revealed. He agreed that parents' meetings would be the ideal places for such information to be given. How will parents be notified? Is it possible that notifications of such meetings, or even the ballot papers, will lie at the bottom of school bags along with crusts of bread and empty crisp bags for perhaps several weeks? If the Minister has more precise proposals, will he tell us about them?

Mr. Gerald Howarth (Cannock and Burntwood): I support the Minister's remarks and wish at the outset to thank him for including clause 17 in the revised Bill. He will recall that, when I intervened in his speech in the guillotine debate, I expressed concern about some of the experiences in England and Wales and said that such experiences had not filled one with confidence that the local authority would not use its overbearing power to intimidate—I used the word "bludgeon"—parents. The Minister has shown the Government's commitment to parental choice.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): I hope that the Minister will make it absolutely clear that he will not allow to happen in Scotland what has been going on in England. For example, *The Birmingham Daily News* wrote:

"Opt-out school banned by city council"

and under that headline noted:

"More than 1,000 Birmingham youngsters have been banned from using the city's libraries because their school has opted out".

Such disgraceful behaviour must not be repeated in Scotland.

Mr. Howarth: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing that to the attention of the House because it illustrates the pitfalls that can face schools when the local authority seeks to be overbearing.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for two Englah

[Mr. Andrew Welsh]

Members—who are interfering in our proceedings, anyway—to discuss a purely English matter on what is a Scottish subject?

Madam Deputy Speaker: This is the Parliament of the United Kingdom. All voices will be heard.

Mr. Howarth: I am grateful to you for that ruling, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I remind Opposition Members that although they may accuse us Englishmen of interfering in Scottish affairs, the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) could be seen rushing down the corridor to participate in and vote on English matters.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): I left to take part in a Division on the Local Government and Housing Bill, a measure which affects my constituents in Scotland as much as it affects the people of England.

Mr. Howarth: The hon. Gentleman could not resist the temptation to vote on matters concerning England and Wales.

The Minister has shown the Government's commitment to ensuring that both sides of the argument on this matter are fully explored, and I can think of no fairer system that could be introduced in this legislation. Let us not forget that the Bill is permissive. It imposes no statutory requirement on schools in Scotland to opt out. It is not draconian. It enables parents to reach a decision for themselves. It shows a genuine concern by the Government for parental choice.

The hon. Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) said that we were concerned with the wishes of parents. Although the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) initially described as excellent the Strathclyde regional council's document, that document was widely rejected by the Labour party because it flew in the face of Labour's policy, which was enunciated only a month later, and that was comprehensives all round. It did not seem to wish to see the diversity of education provision in Scotland.

We are left with confusion on the Socialist Benches. Although the Opposition apparently welcome the amendment, the thrust of the Labour party's policy on Scottish education has been to return to the same grey uniform policy of "Take it or leave it. We the politicians know best", which was the policy that it brought before the nation in the 1960s.

Mr. Sillars: Irrespective of party divisions, I, like most other Scottish Opposition Members, am sick and tired of hearing lectures from people who are grossly ignorant of the history and development of Scottish education and its achievements.

Ayrshire decided to move to a comprehensive system at the same time as Enfield in England, but the experience was different. There were major problems south of the border, but there were no major problems north of the border, where the comprehensive scheme was implemented and has been a shining success ever since.

We in Scotland agree with comprehensive education, because it fits in with the egalitarian nature of the body politic in Scotland. If Conservative Members from south of the border are interested in Scottish education, they should visit our comprehensive schools to see the variety of education provided for children and the considerable stimulus given to them during their school life. They will see the degree of commitment that has existed for generations among Scottish teachers because they believe in the philosophy that underwrites Scottish education. The only time that that has been broken was during the dispute between the teachers' unions and the minority Government represented by the Minister. He did more damage to Scottish education in a few months than Attila the Hun could have done if he had come over and roamed about the place.

Unfortunately, we are under the pressure of a guillotine, but will the Minister tell me about amendment No. 3? I want to know whether I am correct in saying that a school without a school board cannot opt out. It is a great tragedy that we have reached this late stage before some hon. Members have had an opportunity to ask Ministers for elucidation.

Most Scottish people would like the television in the Chamber to be live tonight so they could see that they are reasonably well represented on the Opposition Benches. They would also see that at one time there were no Scottish Tory Members present. There are now two—the Minister and the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn). More importantly, I would like the television cameras to be on when the Division bell goes and the Conservative Benches begin to fill up with English Tories passing through into the Division Lobby to vote us down irrespective of our point of view, even though we represent the majority opinion in Scotland on this measure.

The position is becoming a farce. The Government will pay heavily for that farce when the House is televised and Scottish people do not need to rely on us to tell them that we can win all the arguments but that we are overwhelmed by the arrogant and ignorant English Conservative Members who do not give a click of their fingers for the Scottish people. However, their day of reckoning will come.

I was pleased that the Minister nodded when I asked that key question. We should spread the word throughout Scotland that, if there are no school boards, there can be no opting out. The Government have inserted the necessity for a school board because their ultimate objective in Scottish education is the privatisation of some schools. There must be a mechanism to take us into the interim phase of school boards and opting out and then on to the the final phase of the objectives set down by the ideologue, the chairman of the Tory party in Scotland the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth).

We should tell the Scottish people and parents and those who will be parents that, if they want to prevent the ultimate privatisation of our education system, they should not go down the road of the school boards.

5.45 pm

Mr. McAllion: The last English Conservative Member who spoke—the hon. Member for Cannock and Burntwood (Mr. Howarth)—finished his peroration with the observation that the Labour party argued that politicians know best. That could not be further from the truth. However, it could not be more apposite to describe the way in which the Tory party in Scotland operates. It has been overwhelmingly rejected by popular opinion in

Scotland, but the Tory Government continue to push every one of their prejudices down the throats of the Scottish people, irrespective of what those people think.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: Will the hon. Gentleman concede that the Bill says that it is the parents who will decide? The Secretary of State is not imposing on Scottish parents the requirement that they shall move to self-governing status.

Mr. McAllion: Nothing could be further from the truth. It is a ruse on the part of Conservative Members to continue to argue that this is permissive, not statutory, legislation. The Government would not impose statutorily on schools within education authority control a requirement that they should all move to direct control by the Scottish Office. If they did that, they would be treating all the schools the same. The basis of the legislation is that some schools in Scotland will be treated differently from others. That is why it is permissive. It is to allow some schools to opt out, while the rest remain under education authority control. It is designed to allow schools that opt out to be given more capital resources and more revenue resources and to receive more favoured treatment by the Government. That is why the legislation is permissive. No Opposition Members are convinced by the Government's arguments.

I was interested in the response that the Minister made to the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) when she asked whether there could be moratorium on the time between a school board being established and any possibility of that school requesting opting-out status. The Minister said quickly, "No." He said that because those schools are to opt out from August 1990 onwards. If there were to be a two-year moratorium, it would take us beyond the next general election. Thereafter, there would be no possibility of any schools opting out, because the Government will not be in power after 1991 or 1992, and nor will this legislation which they have imposed on the people of Scotland.

Mr. McFall: On the finances of opted-out schools, my hon. Friend will remember that, in column 237 of the Standing Committee report, I asked the Minister about the finances that would be available to schools for opting out. He told me that the finances would be no more than those presently received from the education authority. However, in *The Daily Telegraph*, this week there was a report about the opting out of schools in England, where a number had been given more than they had received from the education authority. There were no apologies for that from the Secretary of State for Scotland. They will receive more because privatisation is on the agenda. It is bribery, and nothing else.

Mr. McAllion: My hon. Friend is right to describe what is now happening in England——

Mr. Gerald Howarth *rose*——

Mr. McAllion: I will not give way again to the hon. Gentleman, as he has made his own speech.

The Minister responsible for education expressed concern about the provisions in the Scottish legislation not being as tight as those for England and Wales. The Minister explained that that was why the Government were accepting this group of amendments. I welcome that back-pedalling when I compare it with the position that was taken by the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), in Committee.

It is refreshing to witness this change of tack and the change in personalities since the Minister of State has taken over responsibility for education. It suggests that he accepts, at least in part, the fundamental argument that was advanced by the Opposition in Committee. We said that, when the Bill left Committee, the way was open for a small clique of parents to hijack school boards and thereafter to hijack boards of management and to take schools out of education authority control without the approval of the majority of parents with children attending those schools. I am glad that the Minister says now that he wants to ensure that parents properly appreciate what they are voting for. That is something that never concerned the Under-Secretary of State.

We are told now that, before a ballot takes place, the education authority will have to be informed. Four or six weeks will have to pass before a second resolution is passed by the school board announcing its intention to hold a ballot. The Minister made his intention clear when he said that the education authority and the school board would want to conduct what he said—I took a note of what he said and I may not have recorded his words exactly, but I have the drift of them—would be several weeks of campaigning, with mass publicity, to ensure mass support for whatever proposals came forward from the school board thereafter. I believe that those were the words that the Minister used, and I find them somewhat optimistic.

When the Minister was questioned about the resources that would be made available to school boards and education authorities to allow them to indulge in mass campaigning on the issue before the parents that would be the subject of the ballot, he was more than vague in his reply. He gave no guarantee that additional resources would be made available to the boards or the authorities to enable them to conduct the campaigns which the hon. Gentleman now says are necessary if ballots are to have any meaning in the context of whether schools should opt out of local education authority control.

The Minister's position is flawed for another reason. It ignores the secondary importance which is attached in the Bill to ballots of parents. The Minister referred to the outcome of any such ballot as a positive statement of parental opinion. What does he mean by that? Does he mean a clear majority of all those who are entitled to vote in the ballot? We tried again and again to get a ministerial response to that question in Committee, but we remained unsuccessful.

It remains unclear what the Secretary of State for Scotland will regard as a positive statement of parental opinion. The Minister of State has repeated the statement that the Secretary of State for Scotland will make to those who have chosen to express their vote. There is still the possibility that, after a publicity campaign and a ballot has been held, a clear minority of parents who intended to vote for opting out will be regarded by the Secretary of State as having made a positive statement of parental opinion, thereby allowing the Government to say that the school should opt out of education authority control.

On 3 May, when we were dealing with the guillotine motion, the Secretary of State made a comment which may be helpful to both sides of the argument. He said that he wanted to ensure the right of local communities to control their school structure, that being one of the finest

[Mr. McAllion]

traditions of Scottish education. I think that everyone will agree with that sentiment. Unfortunately, nothing in the Bill guarantees that that tradition will continue. It will still be possible for a minority of parents to win a minority vote in a ballot and thereafter to secure the support of the Secretary of State in allowing the school to opt out of education authority control. That is unjust and undemocratic, especially in the context of current Scottish politics.

I remind the Minister that, since the Bill emerged from Committee, there has been a change of opinion in Scotland. The Scottish people are listening to the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Stirling and paying attention to the debate on education in Scotland. The opinion polls show that support for the Labour party in Scotland stands at 55 per cent. while support for the Tories is only 18 per cent. In other words, the Tories have sunk even lower than the depths to which they fell during the 1987 general election. That is because measures of the sort that we are confronted with in the Bill have been forced down the throats of the Scottish people.

The Scottish people have been denied the Parliaments for which they have voted in successive general elections. They have been denied also the opportunity to vote in elections by a Prime Minister who is now running scared of a stalking horse in the Conservative parliamentary party. At the same time, she is running even more scared of the electorate outside this place. The Scottish people can express their opinion only through opinion polls and local government elections. They have done so again and again and have made it clear that they do not want the legislation that is being introduced by this Government. The democratic voice of the Scottish people has been heard. They do not want the Bill. If the Minister listens to the people of Scotland, he will withdraw it.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): The hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Sillars) has again done the House a service by giving an entirely ignorant description of the history and merits of Scottish education. It is not renowned for its worth because of comprehensivisation: it is renowned because there are few other systems which have more successfully seen parents determined to encourage the education and excellence of their children. If we examine the encyclopaedia of those who have been successful in the world——

It being two hours after the commencement of proceedings on the timetable motion, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order this day, to put forthwith the Questions necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that hour.*

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 5 to 8, 11 to 13, 20, 21, 26 to 29, 48 to 51, 53 to 55, 4, 17, 39, 10, 14, 15, 82, 89, 90, 16, 19, 22 to 24 and 41 to 43 *agreed to.*

Clause 27

RECURRENT GRANT IN RESPECT OF PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Lords amendment: No. 30, in page 17, line 22, leave out "in implementation of the authority's duty".

Mr. Lang: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Lords amendments Nos. 31 to 36.

Mr. Lang: I am pleased that these amendments have come before us today. They are concerned with technicalities of the financial arrangements for self-governing schools which provide for children with records of needs. But beyond that, they give the House the opportunity to take stock of the totality of the benefits and safeguards which the Bill contains to ensure that no child with special educational needs will be worse off when a school, be it a special school, a mainstream primary school or a secondary school, achieves self-governing status.

It is true that the Bill as originally presented did not provide specifically for special schools to elect to become self-governing. The problems of doing so, although not insurmountable, appeared difficult and, at that time, it was thought best to defer tackling them immediately. In Committee, however, Back-Bench Members argued persuasively that parents of children at special schools should not be denied opportunities given to others by the Bill—so persuasively, in fact, that my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) voted for the amendment to include special schools and agreed to introduce further amendments which would support it. Let it not be forgotten that this amendment was tabled by various members of the Committee, and originally by the Opposition, not by the Government. The Government bowed to the wishes of the Committee.

In making arrangements for recurrent grant for special schools, the changes that we made to the Bill also deal specifically with the provision for children with records of needs who are accommodated in mainstream schools. Mainstream placement of these children is becoming increasingly common and most schools which become self-governing are likely at some time to have such a child on their role.

The Bill now ensures full funding for the education of recorded children attending self-governing schools. It provides for discussion and exchange of information between the board of a school and the authority so that agreement can be reached on the level of provision to be made and the cost of that provision.

I have heard it said by the Opposition that when a special school ceases to be under education authority control it will mean that the authority's strategy for special educational needs will be destroyed. But that will not happen. The purpose of the dialogue to which I have referred is precisely to ensure that the self-governing school will continue to play its full part in that strategy. We made it clear that the range of provision for special educational needs is a characteristic of a school which may not be changed except by a ballot of parents and with the consent of the Secretary of State. I assure the House that, save in very exceptional circumstances, I do not envisage that consent being given when the existing level of provision needs to be maintained as an essential element in the arrangements for special educational needs in the area of the education authority in which the self-governing school is located.

6 pm

We do not stop there; we wish schools to be progressive in this area. Schools are therefore given a positive duty to consider improvements in provision for special educational needs. To help that, the Bill provides that an extension of such provision is not to be regarded as a change in the characteristics of the school, and the balloting procedures and so on need not be operated.

Perhaps the most important aspect of our approach, as set out in clause 27, is the reassurance that it will give to parents of children with learning difficulties. They have been concerned that self-governing schools might be tempted to marginalise special educational needs and divert the resources so urgently needed by their children to other purposes. That cannot happen. The agreement between the authorities and the schools will earmark the resources needed and will guarantee that the identified provision will be made by the school. In essence, priorities for special educational needs will be agreed and implemented.

Although the Bill will protect this area of expenditure, we have taken steps to ensure that the arrangements are not inflexible. Much has been made by those who do not want special schools to be given the same rights as others of the difficulty that schools and authorities might have when predicting needs. I readily accept that that will not be easy and that a school believed likely to be the most appropriate placement for a recorded child may not ultimately be found to be so. Variations may increase or decrease the level of need at a particular self-governing school.

We have therefore provided in clause 27(6) for agreements to be varied at any time during the financial year. Once a variation is agreed, the recurrent grant will be altered accordingly. Thus, on a change of plan involving a recorded child, the resources that it was proposed to use at the intended school could be transferred to the school that the child is attending. I hope that the House will agree that the outcome for children with special educational needs has been satisfactory.

I believe that the provisions now in the Bill show that we should have taken the bull by the horns and included special schools from the outset. Moreover, we have at all stages had a great regard for the special needs of children with learning difficulties, and I am bound to record that in part III of the Bill, as well as in part I, this concern has transcended party barriers. The humane and sensitive—not to mention long—debates that we have had on this issue at all stages of the Bill's progress have shown the work of the House and that of another place in the best of lights.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): These procedures have been outrageous, and this manner of dealing with important Scottish business will be short-lived when vision returns to the Chamber—we cannot wait.

When I read the report of the Committee's proceedings I was reminded of the way in which my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) dealt with hecklers at a meeting who were giving him a bad time. He responded to rent-a-mob by telling them that they had made a grave error by underestimating his insensitivity. That is what has happened with this Bill.

It never occurred to anyone that the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) could possible consider that special schools could appropriately be included in the opting-out procedures. The Opposition will never again underestimate his nastiness. We shall never, for instance, table an amendment stating that we should privatise the air that we breathe, because the hon. Member for Stirling would accept it.

However, even the hon. Gentleman realised eventually that there was something special about special schools and that it was inappropriate for them to opt out, but he became persuaded in Committee that special schools should be included. This is a valuable service—it is not generally criticised—for a vulnerable group of people and, of necessity, it must be provided over a wide area. I can think of no sort of institution more prone to being taken over by a small group.

I am sure that all hon. Members have shared my distressing experiences at constituency surgery whenever a new theory of special education comes along. It might come from the Centre for Human Achievement; it might have to do with conductive education; it might be almost anything. The parents of these children have been dealt a raw deal by life and they hanker after any solution that is offered.

For example, the hon. Member for Stirling paid a single visit to Hungary and came back enthusing about conductive education. I make no comment on the virtues or otherwise of such education; it should be considered, but it is disturbing that, because of a passing fad, a relatively small group of parents might be able to change the nature of a school and impose on it a theory that might turn out to be wrong, with all the consequential difficulties.

The other reason why the proposal for the opting out of special educational schools is so offensive is that the greatest virtue of special schools lies in their links with the services provided by the local authority and the health board. Needlessly to introduce difficulties into these links might make it difficult to obtain services of occupational therapy, psychology, speech therapy, social work, nursing and transport. The Minister has admitted that this is going to cause greater complexity, and it is a foolish and regrettable step.

We need to examine the admission criteria of special schools. When there is a parental influence over a school, the parents tend to believe that the school is for children like their own, thereby excluding those who do not fit in. I have heard of schools rejecting wheelchair cases because of the problems that that would present for the other children. Local authorities with strategic responsibility for an area must take a position on this. It is offensive that tiny schools providing services to a large geographical area should be able to distort the services that are available to others in that area. That will destroy the coherence of the services for special educational needs.

We welcome many of the improvements in the Lords amendments, but I and my hon. Friends want to register our sense of outrage at the way in which this matter has been dealt with and at the sheer insensitivity of the Minister. We shall come to regret the day when this Bill was passed, and we shall have a sense of shame that this clause is part of a Scottish Act.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: I am pleased to be able to speak on this group of amendments. As those hon. Members

[Mrs. Margaret Ewing]

who served on the Standing Committee will know, because of my background a great deal of my time in Committee was concentrated on special schools and special needs.

It was with great sadness in Committee that I saw people with special needs become a political football. Whatever the Labour party's faults in picking up an amendment that was originally submitted by the Scottish Parent Teachers Council, The hon. Members for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) and for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh), who are not present, were more despicable in picking up the amendment and not speaking about special needs, special schools or handicapped children, but playing a neat party political point and ignoring a key issue.

It is interesting that the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) did not follow the example of the Conservative party chairman in England and Wales and ensure that special schools were exempted from the Bill. The Minister was foolhardy to allow himself to be manipulated by his acolytes on the Back Benches into going down that road, which was far in excess of what we have seen from the Department of Education and Science.

We are dealing with one of the most vulnerable sections of our society. Parents with handicapped children are deeply concerned about their children's education, whether there will be a facility for them within the local community or whether their children will have to be transported elsewhere.

Children in my constituency have to travel from Elgin to Aberdeen, where they stay for the week and then return home at weekends. To turn this into a party political issue is despicable. It is one of the lowest levels of behaviour that I have ever witnessed in Committee in all the years that I have served in the House.

The Lords amendments improve the Bill, but they go nowhere near recognising the real concerns of parents. It is unfortunate that we did not have the opportunity to discuss records of need, a matter which was dealt with in amendments Nos. 65 and 72. For the benefit of those organisations which will be reading our deliberations, if they have not heard them, it is worth putting it on the record that those amendments came after about 17 others and were followed by another 30, yet we had all of 10 minutes to discuss the group. Amendments Nos. 65 and 72 were important, but they were not even given an airing in the farcical situation of the guillotine being imposed.

The Minister should remember that schools establishing units dealing with children with special needs, or trying to involve them in the day-to-day life of the school, will face major expenditure, whether it be for access for the physically handicapped or for the purchase of equipment to deal with a child's handicap. The Minister should read some of the articles produced by the Royal National Institute for the Blind or the Royal National Institute for the Deaf on the type of equipment that is needed and how expensive it is. Will additional capital grants be made available to self-governing schools which provide continuing access for handicapped or disabled youngsters? Capital requirements are important.

If a school becomes self-governing, the danger is that the board of management will decide that it is not worth buying a piece of equipment for a child with a specific handicap and will suggest that the child goes to another school. Such a child may then be removed from the family, yet the family is vital to any child with special needs. They, more than any other child, need to return to the love and warmth of their home within the community.

I am deeply concerned that, whatever reassurances may be mouthed at the Dispatch Box, the guarantee that currently exists that specific handicaps will be provided for, either through special schools or through special capital grants, will no longer be available. I hope that the Minister will comment on that when he replies.

The Minister said that a great deal of consultation has taken place on how best to cope with various comments made in Committee and on Report. Will he tell us exactly what consultation has taken place with those organisations with specialist knowledge of handicapped children? He will recall that, on Report, my hon. Friend the Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) referred to a letter dated 2 June from Mr. Cunliffe, responding to points that I had raised in Committee. That was a Friday, so I presume that it reached the various organisations, most of them voluntary, on Monday 5 June. That letter asked them to reply no later than Tuesday 13 June. Is the Minister talking about a similar pathetic attempt at consultation? I would have much more respect for the Minister if he would list the organisations to whom he spoke.

What assessment was made of the needs of children in Scotland and of the provision for the training of teachers in what is a highly skilled area? Those teachers have been the most deprived of in-service facilities. There have been cuts throughout the history of remedial education and further cuts in learning support. Fewer and fewer people are being trained in those areas. What consultation did the Minister have with the colleges of education on the provision of teacher training in those areas?

6.15 pm

I could raise many other aspects on this group of amendments. I am genuinely angry at the way in which the Government treated the issue in Committee, on Report and in the other place. There has been no genuine commitment to even understand the extent of the problem that exists. I doubt whether the Minister has even read the survey published by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys pointing out the number of disabled people who exist in Scotland. I doubt whether real cognisance has been taken of the extent and depth of the problem. He has not given the most vulnerable in our society the real assurance they need, that, under this legislation, facilities for any handicapped child will be available, where possible within their community and, where that is not possible, that at least grants will be made available to help parents when residential education is needed.

I am not convinced that the Government have taken those points on board to any great extent. I shall support the amendments, but with much concern and reticence, because they do not go anywhere near meeting the needs that exist.

Mr. McAllion: I share the anxieties expressed by the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) about the way in which the matter was dealt with in Committee. The consideration of special education should not descend into petty party-political point-scoring as it did in Committee. It is regrettable that, in introducing the amendments, the Minister continued the tradition set by the hon. Member

for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) of trying to turn this into inter-party political bickering. The matter deserves much more serious consideration.

Sometimes the Minister and his hon. Friends give the impression that they have decided to allow special schools to opt out of education authority control, not because that would be best for the children who attend such schools but simply as a means of embarrassing the Labour party over the way in which some amendments were tabled in Committee. That is reprehensible. It is something that we might have expected from the hon. Member for Stirling, but I did not expect it from the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang). I hope that when he replies he will apologise for giving the impression that he is continuing to play party politics with special education.

Will the Minister deal with the important strategy that is pursued by education authorities in making provision for special education? When I was first elected to Tayside regional council, its policy was to send all blind children to the Royal Blind school in Edinburgh. That posed serious problems for parents: from the age of five, their children were expected to leave their homes in Dundee and stay in Edinburgh between Monday and Friday, returning only at weekends. The parents therefore formed a campaign group called Sight. Having lobbied local councillors and the education authority, they gradually succeeded in obtaining provision for their children. Now a special unit provides primary education for blind children in a Dundee school; a similar unit provides them with secondary education.

If the Minister's interpretation of the amendments is correct, I assume that it will be possible for such a special unit to opt out and to set up its own provision, parallel with that offered by the education authority. If that is so, it should be resisted: owing to the number of blind children attending the Dundee units, it would be extremely wasteful to duplicate such provision.

The Minister said that the Secretary of State for Scotland will intervene to ensure that such provision as I have described will remain. I trust that it will not be possible for those units to opt out, and that the needs of all children requiring special education in my area will continue to be met by the education authority. I hope that all the resources that the authority requires will be provided and integrated to ensure that the needs of children come before those of any political prejudice about opting out.

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): Although I believe that it is vital to cater for children with special educational needs, it is entirely inappropriate to deal with special schools in the context of self-governing status. The Government should not have included clause 27 in the Bill. There is no basic demand for self-governing status in the special schools, and it is significant that fewer parents have been taking up positions on school boards. That reflects not a lack of interest on their part, but the close and intimate links that already exist between parents and staff in special schools. Parents, on the whole, have overwhelming confidence in the management and administration of such schools. The Government have placed an unacceptable burden on parents who already spend many hours caring for their children. The uncertainty created by the Bill will make it extremely difficult for a local authority to provide special education on the basis of a planned system, and to allocate funding where it is required.

As for conductive education, although I welcomed the Health Minister's support for the sending of children to the Peto institute in Hungary, many physiotherapists and speech therapists—who had tried for years to obtain resources to give those children intensive therapy—are astonished and dismayed. They are deeply hurt, and feel that the Government have dismissed their years of effort.

Will the special schools have to buy in services from the NHS? I fear that what has been built up as an integrated team service is likely to become fragmented and destabilised, as have so many other services—particularly the NHS—following the Government's actions.

Mr. Lang: There is relatively little time for me to reply, but I shall try to cover at least some of the points that have been made.

Following what has been said by some Opposition Members, I think it appropriate to put into perspective the circumstances in which the Bill came to be amended. The hon. Member for Clydebank and Milngavie (Mr. Worthington) put something of a gloss on the Opposition's behaviour. In England, there is no provision for special schools to opt out, and the Scottish Bill originally provided for an option for regulation to allow it at a later date. However, the Opposition simultaneously tabled two sets of amendments, one designed to bring the Scottish position into line with the Education Reform Act 1988, and the other—sponsored, I understand, by the Scottish Parent Teacher Council—to include special schools in the entitlement to opt out from the outset.

My hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) added his name to those amendments—which strikes me as entirely proper, as he supported them. That led to the debate, as a result of which the view of the Committee prevailed, and it was decided to make the change. Surely that is far from being a reprehensible or party-political approach to what is indeed a serious issue. In my view, the issues concerning special educational needs —which are difficult and sensitive, and to which Conservative Members attach great importance—have been debated not only sensitively, but thoroughly and well.

It being two and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order this day, to put forthwith the Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that hour.*

Lords amendment agreed to.

MR. SPEAKER *then designated Lords amendments Nos. 35 and 36 as appearing to him to involve questions of privilege.*

Lords amendments Nos. 35 and 36 agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Lords amendments Nos. 31 to 34 agreed to.

Clause 30

CHANGE IN CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-GOVERNING SCHOOL

Lords amendment: No. 37, in page 20, line 19, after "board" insert

"held, subject to subsection (1A) below, not less than five years after the incorporation date".

Mr. Lang: I beg to move, That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this we may take Lords amendment No. 38, in page 20, line 23, at end insert—

"(1A) With the prior written consent of the Secretary of State a motion for such a resolution as is mentioned in subsection (1) above may be determined at a meeting of the board of management held at a date earlier than subsection (1) above would require.".

Mr. Lang: The amendments prevent the board of management of a self-governing school from initiating the procedures in clause 30 to change the characteristics of the school for a period of at least five years from the incorporation of the board unless it has the prior consent of the Secretary of State. They give precise expression to our stated policy, which is, in a nutshell, that the change to self-governing status would itself be change enough for any school to absorb, without its having to contemplate further major organisational change shortly afterwards. There must, of course, be provision for the exceptional case: for example, population movement in a locality could radically affect demand for a particular school. That is covered by amendment No. 38. It avoids the defect of an otherwise similar amendment, which was rightly rejected by my hon. Friend in Committee.

Clause 30 seems to have received more attention than any other clause in the Bill. Let me say something about how we see it working, particularly in the light of the amendments. It should first be said—although it ought to be obvious—that it is essential to provide some means by which a school can adapt its organisation to changing circumstances. That applies in the public and private sectors equally. An independent school is governed by the rules of the marketplace; it must identify a demand that it can meet, and that is sufficient to ensure that it attracts enough pupils to remain financially viable. It is free to adapt its organisation accordingly.

On the other side of the fence, an education authority is a public provider, with a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate school provision for the geographical area that it covers. To do that, it too must be free to close schools, to open new ones and to reorganise and adapt those that continue under its management.

The self-governing school stands somewhere between the two. It is a free-standing institution and, in that respect, is like an independent school. It remains part of the public sector, however, and, on that account, must be subject to some control over any major changes that it proposes in the range or character of its provision. However, it would be absurd if a self-governing school were, alone among schools, to be prevented by statute from ever changing its characteristics.

Control over a school is twofold. First, a board of management cannot just come to the Secretary of State and, so to speak, do a private deal with him to get its scheme of government amended. It has to obtain support in a ballot of parents and then publish its proposals. Only then can it go to the Secretary of State and ask him to determine whether it is to be allowed to change its status.

6.30 pm

Secondly, the Secretary of State, by virtue of another amendment to the clause, has to take account of the implications of any proposed change for the education authority's own provision in the area. In other words, he is precluded from considering the self-governing school's stated case in total isolation. He has to look at it as part of the pattern of public provision for the area—which, after all, is what it is.

So much for statute. I might add that it would run against the grain of the Government's policy that any school in the public sector should close its door to a whole class or category of parents. That would be a denial of choice, whereas we are seeking to maximise choice.

All sorts of fears have been expressed, including the fear that self-governing schools would become, in one way or another, selective—academically, socially or on religious grounds. I do not know how far these fears have been artifically stoked up, but, whether they are genuine or not, I do not believe that they are well founded.

Parents who look to self-governing schools to provide an exclusive haven of any sort are likely to be disappointed. We have specifically provided that the right of a parent to have his child admitted to a self-governing school shall be the same as his right to send the child to the education authority school of his choice.

As for the question of exclusion on religious grounds, which has been raised from time to time, it is a general provision of the law—and has been so in Scotland since 1872—that any public school shall be open to any child, regardless of religious affiliation. That goes even for denominational schools at present, and it will apply equally to self-governing schools.

Finally, I doubt whether in practice there will be much demand from parents with children at self-governing schools for such a change of character, except where it is obviously forced on them by circumstances. The parents will have chosen the school as it is and will value it for the character that it has. Moreover, if the school ceases to attract pupils who want to send their children to that school, it will not remain financially viable for long. Schools will be unable to afford to be exclusive.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): The Minister said that it is difficult to envisage circumstances in which a school would wish to change its character, but he said earlier that he thought that one circumstance might be a shift of population. Can the Minister provide more detail about why a shift of population would lead school authorities to believe that they should change not the size but the character of the school?

Mr. Lang: Circumstances change outwith a school's control. Any school—whether local authority, private sector or self-governing—has to reappraise the surrounding environment, to take account of it and to make whatever alterations might appear to be necessary and appropriate.

Mr. McFall: The Minister said that schools may find that they are not financially viable. If an opted-out school was not financially viable because it could not attract pupils and the school approached the Government for financial assistance after opting out, what would their response be?

Mr. Lang: The Government would approach the financial needs of opted-out schools in exactly the same way, using the same criteria, as they approach the financial viability of schools that had not opted out. They would use the same criteria as local authorities use. The hon. Gentleman will find no grounds for complaint on that score.

Our policy is clear. It has never been the Government's intention that opting out should be a device for changing the character of a school. We have made that clear from the outset. The amendment puts the matter beyond any doubt and I commend it to the House.

Mr. Worthington: The Minister has used mild and gentle words, but I must repeat the words of the hon. Member for Stirling—that this is the most radical and profound change in Scottish education within a generation. How does one square the two statements?

We welcome the safeguards that the other place has introduced. It will not now be possible to change the character of a school for five years. A Labour Government will have been returned to power before any school can change its character, and we will repeal this measure—make no doubt about it.

A disturbing feature of the Bill is the funding of opted-out schools. As the Minister said, it is not a question of the Government wanting, by giving schools the option to opt out, to provide more choice. As the hon. Member for Stirling said, the Government want to introduce most radical and profound change. There can be radical and profound change only if schools apply for opted-out status.

Schools will apply for opted-out status in two ways. First, some areas—they will tend to be relatively well-off—will wish to embark on the long-term strategy, of turning all their schools into selective schools and, I have no doubt, in the long term into private schools in the independent sector.

Secondly, other schools that wish to opt out will be in areas where closures are threatened. Any councillor, or former councillor, who has experience of school closures is scarred for life. Everybody acknowledges that there is a surplus of school places and that schools should be closed. But when one gets down to it, it is never "our school." It is always somebody else's school that should be closed, whether it has only a few or a great many pupils.

Whenever the possibility of closing a school is talked about in future, the appeals procedure will be there as a backstop. As part of their strategy, groups of parents will decide to apply to the Secretary of State for opted-out status. The Secretary of State will then choose which schools should have that status. Labour-controlled areas will be ignored by him. Under the 1980 legislation, the Secretary of State said that he did not want to be involved in school closures—that he wished to return the power to close schools to local authorities. Very difficult school closure issues will, however, be decided by the Secretary of State. He will say, "Tory areas will keep their schools. Labour areas will close their schools." It is as simple as that.

After schools have been awarded opted-out status, the Government will seek, as was intimated in the *Sunday Times* article to which I referred earlier, to turn them into the equivalent of English grammar schools. They will be helped, because that is Government strategy. The Secretary of State's allocation of grants over a five-year period will shovel money towards opted-out schools. It will be clearly seen that they are getting preferential treatment.

The revenue account formula is of no use whatsoever. Clear obligations are being laid on all local authorities; they will ensure that no action can be taken against opted-out schools. What obligations does the measure impose on the Secretary of State to play fair? We come down to that horrible word "reasonable"—a word that cannot be defined.

The Secretary of State will decide, on his own personal judgment, the recurrent grant to give any school. The intention of the Under-Secretary of State, who is still manipulating the Scottish education service, is to steer grant towards opted-out schools, thus producing a two-tier system. The same procedure will operate for capital allocation. The Secretary of State will say, "We must feed our own first." By "our own" he means the opted-out schools and not those looked after by the local education authority. Inevitably, if a Tory Government remain in power, a two-tier system will be set up.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Worthington: No, I will not give way. The hon. and learned Gentleman should go back to sleep.

It is extremely serious, because, over the centuries, a clear culture has developed which is precious and which will be destroyed by the Bill. I notice it particularly because of my own background. I had the privilege of moving from the class-ridden English structure with an elitist, snobbish culture into a system in which 96 or 97 per cent. of the population goes to the state school. There are enormous benefits from that. An enormous sense of community and cohesion comes from that identity with the local comprehensive school. It provides choice and variety instead of grey uniformity. I know of not one comprehensive school that is exactly the same as another. The comprehensive system provides the opportunity to develop the characteristics of an area and to give choices that are appropriate to the community. For example, in the Western Isles a school might add in Gaelic and in an area with heavy industry it might add in appropriate skills. The comprehensive system provides the potential for that choice—*[Interruption.]* I give way to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Barry Porter: On the grounds that I have been here and awake. Is the hon. Gentleman advocating that the entire education system should be controlled by the state and that it should all be comprehensive? Is that what he is saying?

Mr. Worthington: A valuable system has been developed in which there must be a role for central Government in education, but there is also a role for education authorities. The Bill proposes a formidable centralisation of control over the state system whereby the Secretary of State decides which schools close and which remain open. When a Labour Government come into power, we shall repeal this legislation and restore the special relationship between the Scottish school system and the community in which it operates. We shall stop the destruction of that relationship by the divisive powers embodied in the Bill.

Mr. Salmond: I should like to pursue the Minister further on the circumstances in which a school might wish to change its characteristics. Perhaps he can supply more detail of the characteristics that could be changed.

In another place, Lord Sanderson said on 18 October that he fully expected that most self-governing schools will have no wish to alter their basic characteristics. This

[Mr. Salmond]

evening the Minister said something very similar. Incidentally, the debate in the House of Lords was as badly attended as our debate has been.

If Ministers in the House of Lords and here tonight can see no circumstances in which schools will wish to change their basic characteristics, why on earth are we debating these amendments? The Minister has tried to palm us off by saying that things are always evolving and that in time there will be changes and it would be ridiculous if self-governing schools could not make the same changes as other schools in the system. What changes does he perceive self-governing schools will wish to make after the five-year period? Will it be a change to single-sex education, religious education or—and this is much more likely—selective education?

6.45 pm

I see in the amendments the possibility of schools changing their characteristics the Government's intention to move the Scottish system of education towards a selective system which has been such a failure south of the border. We have to acknowledge that the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) is a product of the Scottish education system. He is not much of an advert for it, but he is certainly a product of the comprehensive system and the Scottish university system. Many Opposition Members are appalled by the actions of the Under-Secretary of State and his approach to education because he is seeking to deny future generations of Scottish schoolchildren the advantages that he enjoyed. There is no doubt in my mind that the opening up of the possibility of changing the characteristics of Scottish schools through self-governing status is an attempt to open the door to the reintroduction of selective education in Scotland, which would be a major step backwards.

Mrs. Fyfe: During our discussions in Committee, the Opposition had to point out to the Government for many a weary hour that children should not be subjected to changes in the nature or the ethos of their schools any more frequently than necessary.

We had to point out that it would be unreasonable to do as the Government first intended and allow changes in the nature of one to take place virtually as quickly as any group of parents could succeed in winning a vote to do so. Therefore, we welcome the protection in the Lords amendment, especially bearing in mind some of the changes that could be envisaged. For example, a school could change from one teaching both sexes to a single-sex school and back again. It could change from a non-denominational school to one serving a particular denomination and back again. It could change from a school promoting particular abilities and skills such as music and dancing or maths to one teaching whatever subject took the fancy of those deciding these matters.

We debated whether we approved of giving specialist education to children in skills such as dancing and music as we wanted all children's abilities to be fostered. Although we agreed that certain skills should be fostered, we certainly drew a distinction between that and the prospect of a school changing from a comprehensive to one which was aimed at the fast stream—the children who were seen as academic high fliers.

Comprehensive schools are commonplace in Scotland. They exist in many small Scottish towns not because of educational policy but because that was the nature of the beast—in a small area, all the children in the locality came together in such schools. On the whole, it has been a success. We should not exaggerate that success, because under any system some children do not receive the education that they should.

Conservative Members have been dishonest about our education system. Many of the problems with the English comprehensive system are caused by the way that it is run. It is commonplace for teachers to teach subjects for which they do not have a degree, never mind teacher training. A teacher in a secondary school in Scotland is required not only to have the relevant degree but to have the relevant elements in that degree before being allowed to teach that particular subject. For that reason alone, it is hardly surprising that comprehensives in Scotland have been more successful. The egalitarian ethos appertaining to so much of Scottish society is seen in our education system. It is natural and normal to bring together all our children in one building to share their experiences, and they are all treated the same whether they wear a uniform or not.

Conservative Members representing English constituencies served on the Committee considering the Bill. We express our anger once again at their continuous ill-informed and ignorant interventions, their endless disturbances, their schoolboyish raising of points of order and their nonsensical manoeuvres. As the debate draws to a close, thereby offering no further opportunity to debate Scottish education, only two Scottish Tory Back Benchers are present, and only one of the English Tory stormtroopers of the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth)—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Fyfe: May I point out, in answer to the finger waving of Conservative Members——

Mr. Leigh: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order for the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) to comment on the number of Conservative Members present, when only four Scottish Labour Members are present?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that we want to get into the numbers game.

Mrs. Fyfe: I made that point for a very good reason. This is a Conservative Members' Bill. They want to force it on Scotland, yet few are present to defend their actions.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood) *rose*——

Mrs. Fyfe: I will not give way.

The Minister brought on to the Committee a bunch of English Tory Members not because of their interest in Scottish education but merely as stormtroopers to make pests of themselves. Only one has the guts to remain here to defend their position, but he has not been paying attention for most of the evening. He has been wandering in and out and reading something, I cannot see what.

Mr. McFall: Does my hon. Friend recall that those Tory Members who thought that Charles Gray was knighted are the same hon. Members who were asked what

the "qualy" was but did not know? We offered them an awayday ticket to Scotland to find out what it was, but they were so ignorant that they rejected it.

Mrs. Fyfe: My hon. Friend is right. We challenged them to take a test to see whether they could pass the qualy, but not one of them would accept that challenge.

Conservative Members displayed their ignorance of Scottish education in many other ways, but it did not prevent them from wasting hours of our time with their nonsense. They are pushing this legislation through regardless of the wishes of the Scottish people, but they will pay in the end through the loss of seats in Scotland. Tory Members are sure to lose—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I call the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe).

Mrs. Fyfe: I am not surprised that Conservative Members are attempting to prevent Labour Members from expressing their views. They are making much noise because they have nothing to say. They have nothing to contribute to the debate other than schoolboy manoeuvres. Their behaviour will soon be exposed when the House is televised. I wonder whether they will then continue to conduct themselves like stupid public schoolboys. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, would welcome an improvement in their behaviour. I am an ex-teacher in further education, but I never had a class that conducted itself in the way that Conservative Members are now doing. I know that you are often appalled by the conduct of Conservative Members, particularly when a woman Member is speaking.

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Order this day, to put the Questions necessary to dispose of the business to be concluded at that hour.*

Lords amendment agreed to.

Lords amendments Nos. 38, 45 and 46 agreed to.

There being private business set down for consideration at Seven o'clock MR. SPEAKER *suspended the sitting, pursuant to Standing Order No. 16 (Time for taking private business).*

6.57 pm

Sitting suspended.

Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill *[Lords]*

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That the Promoters of the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next Session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first and shall be ordered to be read a second time;

That the Petitions against the Bill presented in the present Session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

7 pm

Mr. Alun Michael (Cardiff, South and Penarth): My main reasons for supporting the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill fall under two headings—jobs and the environment. I want to say a little about each. By convention, I must be extremely brief, but I should be happy to answer points if given leave of the House to do so—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will you ask hon. Members who are standing beyond the Bar to withdraw? I am having difficulty hearing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I understand the hon. Member's point. I ask hon. Members who are not taking part in the proceedings to leave the Chamber quietly.

Mr. Michael: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) for raising that point of order. As I was saying, I shall be happy, if given the leave of the House, to clarify points at the end of the debate or before Second Reading.

Having worked with young people and unemployed people in Cardiff, I have direct experience of the depression and degradation that unemployment brings, and I want to see an end to it. I have also been involved in the economic regeneration of Cardiff and I know just how hard it has been to achieve. We have had successes, but there are still massive problems. Unemployment in south Glamorgan is still above the Welsh average. Much of that unemployment is concentrated in my constituency, in the

[Mr. Michael]

very area covered by the Cardiff bay development, and in areas such as Riverside in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan).

As the Committee will hear in due course, I hope, the barrage is the key to the redevelopment that will bring the jobs that are so vital to the area. Those jobs will help my constituency, but the impact will be felt throughout the region. About 30 per cent. of jobs in Cardiff are filled by workers outside the city and it is estimated that up to 10,000 jobs will be filled by workers from the rest of the region. In cash terms, that is about £75 million in wages, without taking account of the effect of the multiplier or of jobs during the construction period. The figures will be open to testing in Committee, but they show that the Bill should be carried over because it is so important to so many people. In 1981, 20,000 people a day were coming from the valleys of south Wales to work in Cardiff, and road and rail flows have increased since then. People in the region are increasingly interdependent.

There is also the matter of the environment in which we live. I became a member of the city council in the early 1970s because I felt that the city was failing to create real communities for people to live in. At that time, we wanted to stop extending the city ever outwards towards Newport, Barry and Caerphilly and to bring people into the city centre to live. Our efforts were frustrated, but the death of the steel works and other heavy industries and the decline of the docks have created an opportunity, as well as leaving dirt and dereliction behind them.

A start to the regeneration was made when Labour councillors in South Glamorgan spearheaded the Atlantic wharf development with the new county hall. That ambitious development saved money for the ratepayers. This very night the Association of County Councils is presenting its major national award to south Glamorgan for that initiative in this, the centenary year of county council government. The regeneration of south Cardiff needs a more powerful catalyst which will catch the imagination and create opportunities and jobs. That catalyst is the barrage. It has already caught the imagination nationally and internationally.

The real challenge is how we manage this change. It must repsect the existing communities. It must involve affordable homes for local people and their children and grandchildren. These are the things that we are tackling in my constituency. We must keep existing jobs, even if they need to be relocated to make way for development. That is why I am pleased by the encouraging answer given to my question by the Secretary of State for Wales yesterday when he said that assistance for relocation and expansion of local firms would be forthcoming.

We must redevelop south Cardiff so as to enhance and respect the existing city, but to create the jobs that we need and improve the environment in the way that we need, the barrage is the essential catalyst.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): As one who represents a constituency not far from Cardiff and who had a close connection with the dockland area of Cardiff some years ago, I accept the need for redevelopment of that area, but I have yet to be convinced of the need for the barrage. My hon. Friend, perhaps not intentionally, is twinning the ideas of relieving unemployment and constructing the barrage. Unemployment and dereliction in Cardiff could be easily improved by the development of the dockland area, without building a barrage across the rivers.

Mr. Michael: I respect my hon. Friend's views. The House of Lords Select Committee unanimously said:

> "The Committee was convinced on the evidence that the economic case was sound and that the investment prospects were good."

That was an expression of the dependence of jobs on the barrage. I accept that this link needs to be questioned closely, but I cannot go into the detail today. The carry-over motion should be accepted so that this issue can be investigated, as my hon. Friend would wish. I contend that the case for the barrage is strong and urgent. Consideration should be carried over so that opposition to the Bill can be scrutinised by a Committee.

Opposition to the barrage is sincere, but misguided. One element rests on the view that impoundment of water will lead to a rise in ground water and affect some basements. Everyone agrees that this is an issue, and I repeat that I have an open mind on it. However, evidence to date suggests that it has been considerably overstated by the Bill's opponents. As such problems would affect my constituency to the greatest extent, I assure the House that I am vigorously seeking clarity and precision on the likely effects of ground water. It is clear—this point was recently endorsed by the Welsh region of the National Rivers Authority—that the barrage will help to prevent flooding in the city. I should say that—following the line pursued by my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) about jobs—the reassurances about ground water were unanimously accepted by the House of Lords Select Committee.

Mr. Ron Davies: My hon. Friend mentioned the role that has been played by the NRA. As I understand it, now that the scientists in the authority's employ have been freed of the political control that was exercised over them —just as it was over Welsh Water—they have opposed the barrage because of its implications in terms of flooding and water quality. My hon. Friend is obviously in touch with the Bill's sponsors and, presumably, the NRA. Perhaps he can tell us whether the NRA opposes the Bill.

Mr. Michael: I am happy to respond to that point. The answer is no. The NRA has marginally updated the position now that it is a separate body. The updated report would be subject to close scrutiny by the Committee. The NRA's position has been made clear. First, it would improve the situation to lessen dangers in the future. Secondly, it has made strong comments about the safeguards necessary to maintain water quality. The House of Lords Select Committee considered those safeguards adequate. My hon. Friend has raised a matter that needs careful consideration and scrutiny by the Committee.

The importance of Cardiff bay as a site for waders has been overstated by some, but not all, of the opponents of the Bill. The area is not a site of international importance for waders or wild fowl in its own right, but it is not insignificant. That is why the decision to create alternative feeding grounds is important. I hope that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and other groups will recognise the benefits of the barrage for the human environment, and that they will make a positive effort to

develop the alternative lagoon and get its management right. The matter deserves full scrutiny by a Committee of the House.

There is real concern about the national and international environment. It is right that the Government should be under pressure to give greater priority to planning and conserving the environment. However, that is no reason to stop this Bill. We are talking not about a natural environment, but about one that was created by building the docks 150 years ago, tipping and reclamation of land, the despoliation caused by heavy industry and the pressures of a growing city.

The barrage will keep out tidal waters which the House of Lords report described as "far from clean" and it will lead to the removal of many sewer outlets from the Cardiff bay area.

Many people are understandably fearful of the changes which the barrage will bring but many more look forward with hope. One man who sailed out of Cardiff docks for many years said of the mud at low tide, "It stank then and it stinks now. Let's get on with it." He speaks for many people.

South Cardiff has long been the backyard of our city, but in it live some of the best people and some of the closest communities I know. They deserve jobs, homes and a pleasant environment. The Bill can unlock that door to opportunity. We must manage that opportunity in the best way possible for our city, for our communities and for future generations. I ask right hon. and hon. Members, please do not slam that door in our faces.

7.11 pm

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to some of the arguments of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael). I had hoped to be able to synchronise our chronometers and to speak for the same length of time, but as my hon. Friend spoke for less time than I had expected, I may be unable to do that. But I shall do my best.

I take a different view from my hon. Friend and others who support the motion. I doubt its validity. First, we ought to establish clearly the purpose of a carry-over motion. Why are we debating it? Why is it not an automatic procedure? It is an opportunity for the House to decide whether it wishes to give leave to the promoters of a private Bill to allow it to span two parliamentary Sessions. It is a matter for right hon. and hon. Members to consider with all the wisdom that they can muster. They have to consider the state of the Bill. It is not an automatic procedure, where hon. Members turn up, give a nod and it passes through to the next Session. We must decide whether the Bill is in a fit state to be carried over, whether it deserves to be carried over and whether it should have the leave of the House to be considered, not only in the parliamentary year which comes to an end the day after tomorrow, but in the 12 months following the Queen's Speech next week.

This Bill has plainly not earned the right to be carried over. I base my case on the preamble of the Bill and because it appears before us in a defective state. In effect, we are considering two Bills—the one which the House of Lords thought that they sent to the House of Commons, and the one which they sent. I informed my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth, and the promoters of the Bill, through their parliamentary agents, some 26 hours ago of my reasons. I have not received any formal communication, although I have had some informal communication about details of the Bill.

There is no contest between anybody here tonight about whether there is a defect in the Bill. The question is whether that defect destroys the case for a carry-over motion.

When the Bill left the other place it was accompanied, as is normal, by a plan, signed by Lord Elibank, the Chairman of the Lords Committee, which gave effect to the terms of the Bill. There is a line marked on the map. Everybody who lives or who owns a business within that line is protected against ground water damage, which the promoters of the Bill have accepted will be possible after closing off the mouths of the rivers Taff and Ely.

The line offered by the promoters, in the case they presented to the Committee in the other place, was known as plan 12. The map carried two lines—describing the protected property line and the further protected property line. In Committee, their Lordships in their wisdom decided to abolish the inner line, and to make the outer line the sole determinant of the area within which compensation could be paid, or works could be carried out in lieu of compensation, to businesses and homes which had ground water ingress into basements or foundations. That was given the backing of the whole House on Third Reading in the other place.

Plan 12 was prepared by the promoters based on geological estimates, and it covered a large area. There is disagreement about whether ground water effects will be more extensive in my constituency or in that of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth. I think that they will be more extensive in my constituency, but it is a minor point. Thousands of homes will be affected one way or the other. I have not studied the matter that closely, but when I glance at the map I see that more properties will be affected in my constituency and more acreage in my hon. Friend's, but that is a moot point.

What is not a moot point is that in plan 12, as presented to the Lords, the outer boundary was to be the one within which every property had the right to a free survey at the expense of the promoters, and to compensatory work by them to put right any damage caused by water ingress as a result of the barrage. If there was any problem or disagreement about those works, people would be able to go to arbitration in the normal way. The Lords accepted that scheme.

The Chairman of the Committee signed five copies of the plan. One was deposited in the Private Bill Office in this House, one in the Private Bill Office in the other place, one at the headquarters of both of the promoters—the Cardiffff Bay development corporation and South Glamorgan county council—and one in the city hall. However, it turns out that the plan that the Chairman of the Committee, Lord Elibank, signed was not coterminous with plan 12—the plan which the promoters had offered.

Mr. Michael: Perhaps I can assist my hon. Friend and the House. I notified him of this earlier, so it will come as no surprise. This is a serious issue, but it has been dealt with and the formalities can be dealt with easily.

My hon. Friend first mentioned the issue to me late last night, although it could have been raised with the county council at any time during the past two weeks. I mentioned it to the county council this morning. It has checked the

[Mr. Michael]

situation and confirms that my hon. Friend is right. Plan 12 is the correct plan. The council has checked with the authorities and there are two ways in which the situation can be put right. It apologises for the error, which it did not notice until it was drawn to its attention. Either the Chairman of the Lords Committee can sign a new plan, or an amended plan can be put to the Commons Committee. Either could solve the problem—whichever is more acceptable to the authorities of the House. It is right that my hon. Friend should raise the matter, but it has been dealt with, and can be dealt with without difficulty. Perhaps it would be as well for my hon. Friend to leave it at that and get on to the other important issues he wants to raise.

Mr. Morgan: My hon. Friend will have to let me make my own speech in my own way. However, I accept that he is perfectly correct in informing you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he has told me this in a verbal form. In the almost 26½ hours since I communicated this to the parliamentary agents for the promoters, I have received no formal communication from the agents or the promoters to the effect of my hon. Friend's suggestion.

Mr. Michael: I want to place on record the fact that I have spoken to those individuals as well. I assure my hon. Friend that what has been said by the county council has been confirmed by those who represent them. The county, of course, had not been approached by my hon. Friend until he raised the concerns of his constituents, which I recognise are important, with me. I hope that he will accept my reassurance, which is on the record in this House.

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is the first debate on a private Bill that I have attended. I find myself a little confused about the status of the different maps and the lines on the maps. Can you advise us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether the whole Bill is invalidated as a result of the confusion and we thus need to start from scratch, or whether there is a way of getting round the problem?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The matters that I have heard referred to in the course of the debate are matters which, if the House approved the motion before it, could doubtless be considered and determined by the Committee that will consider the Bill in the fullness of time.

Mr. Ron Davies: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to refer to the terms of the motion and especially the fifth paragraph, which says:

"That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph *(b)* of Standing Order 126, relating to Private Business".

The constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) who have now been omitted by the redrawing of the map will be denied the opportunity to petition against the Bill because the map was redrawn following the examination of the Bill by the House of Lords and before the expiry of the Session. Can you give us some guidance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on whether we are now able to proceed with the Bill, knowing that we are, in effect, disfranchising 500 of those constituents—or at least withdrawing their right to petition against the Bill?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am afraid that I cannot tell the hon. Gentleman is precise terms whether petitioners who might be affected by these later developments would be within time to submit their petitions. However, I have no doubt that it would be possible for the Committee of the House to have regard to and to take into account what has been said in this debate in its deliberations on the Bill.

Mr. Ron Davies: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am sorry to pursue the matter, but it is a serious point. If I have understood your ruling correctly, you are saying that the Committee that will consider the detail of the Bill will not be bound by the terms of the motion. If that is the case, should we be discussing—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman asked a question that rightly arose from the paragraph, to which he referred, about the rights of petitioners, as distinct from the rights of Members of this House. I cannot say off-hand—and it would be unwise for me to make an off-the-cuff remark which might prejudice the rights of petitioners—whether there are those who might wish to present a petition and who might be excluded by the terms of that paragraph. However, there would be nothing to prevent the Committee from listening to and taking account of the submissions made by hon. Members in the debate and therefore having regard to the points raised.

Mr. Michael: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I should point out that an undertaking has been given to restore the line to the point where everybody thought it was. There is no question of anybody being disfranchised. The question simply does not arise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Morgan: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker—although I do not know whether I can make a point of order in the middle of my speech—I think that I may be able to help you. The date of 24 July was the last on which petitioners could lodge objections in this House. Do I sit down now?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes. The hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) suggested that all that had happened was that there had been a reversion to what was previously understood about the scope of the Bill in this respect. He suggested—and it would be improper for me to suggest that he was doing anything other than correctly guiding the House—that because the previous delineations were sufficiently known at the relevant time, those who had the right to petition did so and that what is now at issue does not expose the delineations to new petitioners who might be excluded by the time limits. I hope that that is clear.

Mr. Morgan: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If only that were true. What could easily have happened to all or any of the 850 homes and few businesses in the areas affected is that if they had proceeded on the basis of the document on which they thought they were relying, they would have proceeded on the basis that they did not need to petition because they were within the line. They did not, therefore, petition. If they then find that they are outside the line and want to petition about that fact, they have lost the right to do so. Can they have that right restored by the alteration that my

hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth has, in all sincerity, suggested may be made? That is why I am concerned about my constituents' rights.

Mr. Michael: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I tried to explain, surely the position as my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) thought it was a fortnight ago—and he was not sure that there was a problem until this weekend—has been put right. The position is once again as he and everyone else understood it, so there is no problem.

Mr. Rogers: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am genuinely confused now. As I understand the terms of the motion, we are considering a Bill that has been through the House of Lords and has now come here. The argument is that it is now in a fit and proper state to be extended to the next Session of Parliament. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) has submitted that the Bill is not properly prepared to proceed in the next Session. To reinforce my hon. Friend's argument, the evidence for that is that the boundary of the area that will be affected by the Bill has now been altered. Can you help me on this matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Certain facts were put to the people of Cardiff, who then had the right to petition. At that time, there were many people who did not petition against the Bill because the boundary, as delineated on the map, did not affect them. After the Bill has gone through the House of Lords and come here, as a matter——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I thought that the hon. Gentleman was speaking on a point of order, but he seems to be making a speech and, if I may say so, a rather lengthy one.

Mr. Rogers: I should still like your clarification on this matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the Bill is not in a fit and proper state to go through to the next Session, you must rule that the motion is out of order and under the terms of the motion, you do not have any option but to do that. If people have not had the right to petition, if the Bill has not been properly prepared and if it is proceeding on the basis of statistics and information that have been altered by a conservation——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has gone sufficiently far for the House and myself to have grasped the point. As I understand it, the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) has said that it is now clear that the people affected by the scope of the Bill are those who it was assumed would be affected at the relevant date. No one is apparently affected now who has not already had the right to petition. In any case, these are not matters that lead the Chair to rule on the validity of the motion, but matters that doubtless will be taken into account when hon. Members reach a decision on the motion before the House and in the subsequent proceedings on the Bill should the House decide to approve the motion.

Mr. Ray Powell (Ogmore): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will you explain to the House whether, in your other role as Chairman of Ways and Means, you would sanction a Bill coming to the House tonight if it was not in order, or would you rule it out of order, if it was?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member and the House know that, when a private Bill is submitted to the House, it goes before the Examiners, who scrutinise the vires and satisfy themselves that the Bill is in order. Only then is the Bill allowed to seek further progress in the House. It is not necessary for me to give any further clarification. I hope that the position is now clear and that the hon. Member for Cardiff, West will resume his speech.

Mr. Ron Davies: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Have you received notice that the boundaries have been revised or any legal or other advice about the Bill, now that these amendments, post-Lords but pre-Commons, have been incorporated in the map?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: My response is in the negative. I am sure that if anything was out of order, I should have been notified by the appropriate authorities and those who serve me in the House.

Mr. Morgan: I shall resume my speech, but I wish to raise one additional point of great importance which has been overlooked in the past five minutes of exchanges. Extreme care is always taken by those advising petitioners about the phrasing of petitions. If someone lives on one side of a line defined in the Bill, his petition must be phrased in a certain way and it is ruled invalid if a form of words is used which hints that he lives on the other side of the line. Someone within a protected property zone must frame his petition making it clear that he is a householder or the owner of a business within the zone. If the property or business is on the other side of the line, the petition must be phrased differently to be in order. That point must be borne in mind.

Let us consider the general state of the Bill. The motion is not an automatic carry-over motion but a debatable one. I put it to the House that the Bill is not fit to be carried over because it is defective. We have to accept the word of the promoter of the Bill, my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth, that a mistake in the Bill can be put right, but that does not alter the fact that the Bill is defective. He may maintain that it is not very defective, but 850 homes, a hospital and a substantial number of small and medium-sized businesses constitute a sufficiently significant defect to rule the Bill not fit to be carried over. How great an error must the Bill contain to stop it being carried over automatically? In my view, a substantial number of businesses, a hospital and 850 homes in my constituency render the Bill sufficiently defective.

The question whether the Bill is defective is primarily a matter of procedure. I have nothing to show my constituents to prove that the Bill will be put right. I have received no form of communication, either from the promoters or their parliamentary agents.

When deciding whether the Bill is sufficiently close to achieving its objectives to require us to carry it over from one parliamentary Session to another, we must consider whether the Bill commands general support in the community in Cardiff. The Bill is supported by both the local authorities and the appropriate Government Department. However, there is an archaeological freezing process in Government Departments and local authorities which does not apply to public opinion. When a Government Department and two local authorities become committed to a scheme, they find it extremely difficult to change their minds, whatever new information becomes available.

[Mr. Morgan]

The Bill stems from studies carried out in 1985 by the present Secretary of State's predecessor when he represented Pembroke. The measure was eventually presented in the form of a statutory instrument to set up the urban development corporation in March 1987, when the then right hon. Member for Pembroke was still Secretary of State. In a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments on 31 March under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer), the Secretary of State said:

"At the end of 1985, I decided to commission a study of the investment potential in the area with particular reference to the benefits which would flow from the construction of a barrage across the estuaries of the Taff and Ely rivers close to the entrance of Cardiff harbour."

That goes back four years. He continued:

"The results confirmed our view"—

I am not sure who "our" was: perhaps the Secretary of State and a property consultant—

"that it should be possible not just to breathe new life into south Cardiff but to bring forward private sector investment on such a large scale that the project would become one of international significance."—[*Official Report: Fourth Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments &c.*; 31 March 1987, c. 4.]

The idea for the barrage was then presented to the two local authorities and it was proposed that some of the senior councillors become members of the urban development corporation. That is what occurred; a minority of five out of 14 councillors on the corporation are nominated by the local authorities. That is a far superior way of achieving regeneration of a run-down inner-city area than the model normally followed in England, where no local authority representatives are appointed to the body responsible, but it posed a major problem. It meant that, when dissent emerged in the community as more facts became known, it was more difficult for the supertanker of local authorities and the Government Department, aiming straight for the Titanic, to turn themselves around in time because dissent was seen not merely as the result of new information but as a breach of the code of lèse majesté or hara-kiri or omertà.

Mr. Michael: Does my hon. Friend accept that the monitoring committees and liaison committees established in both local authorities did not include in their membership the members nominated to the board and so gave the element of independence encouraged by both local authorities? Those committees could look critically and constructively at much of the detail as the matter proceeded.

Mr. Morgan: No, I do not agree with that. My hon. Friend is right that monitoring committees were set up by both authorities but, as I said, because of lèse-majesté it is psychologically difficult for local authorities to say, "New information has come in which makes us more doubtful. We had better have a general debate about it." They cannot do that simply because their most senior councillors are on the urban development corporation, albeit in a permanent built-in minority.

I do not criticise the local authorities. I would probably have done similarly had I been a councillor. Local authority opinion could not shift as easily as public opinion when new facts emerged to cast doubt on the validity of the original assumptions of 1985 and the establishment of the UDC in 1987, following the meeting chaired by the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West. Local authorities could not divert from the direction upon which they had embarked under the tutelage of the Secretary of State, whatever the private opinion of individual councillors. I make no comment on councillors' private opinions. They are a matter of speculation. We can judge only by the council's decision or lack of decision to change its mind when new facts become available. That is not true for the public and it certainly is not true for us tonight. We all have a free hand to look at the merits of the case for the carry-over motion because we are not Whipped. We can see whether the Bill comes close to achieving its objectives in relation to jobs and improvements in the environment which were fairly set out by my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth.

Would the proposal bring anywhere near the number of jobs talked about in the Bill's preamble or would it have the reverse effect? That seems highly relevant to the carry-over motion. A large number of jobs—about 15,000 —already exist within the area covered by the urban development corporation's compulsory purchase order comprehensive redevelopment area.

When I spoke to the officials who have the tricky task of putting into action the relocation programme, they told me that we would do well to keep half those jobs after they had been relocated to make way for redevelopment. That seems to pose a considerable problem for us when we consider whether the Bill is worthy of a carry-over motion. We have to contemplate the possibility that not only might the proposal not achieve the 30,000 jobs that have been spoken about in the long term, but it might take away 7,500 jobs from the total 15,000 jobs that currently exist. The number of jobs lost may be only 5,000, since not everything would be comprehensively redeveloped, although large areas would be. According to those most closely involved in the relocation of jobs, we would start with a major loss of jobs.

Mr. Michael: Would not my hon. Friend accept that this was precisely the important point which I addressed in my question to the Secretary of State which he answered yesterday? His reassurances of his determination to ensure the retention of jobs play an important role in the way in which we shall pursue the development which will follow on from the barrage.

Mr. Morgan: I accept the sincerity of my hon. Friend's remarks, but regard his point as a minor one compared to the problem which will be caused because many businesses in this area which now pay low rents will have to pay about four times the present level. They will move to highly desirable new industrial estates, but they will have to pay the rent, rates and insurance, all of which are connected with the rental levels.

I fear that the jobs argument is so distant from the preamble to the Bill that it harms not just the case for the Bill, but the prospects of granting the carry-over motion.

Mr. Ray Powell: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for allowing me to pose a question on an issue about which we are all concerned: the number of people which it is suggested could be employed if the carry-over motion were agreed and the scheme were introduced. It is estimated that the scheme will bring more than 30,000 jobs into the area. I am only suggesting that as an estimate and I

appreciate the point made by my hon. Friend that jobs could be lost. Nevertheless, on balance, we could gain about 22,500 jobs in the long term even if we lost the 7,500 jobs which he suggests might go in the short term.

Mr. Morgan: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who always expresses himself with such great sincerity on these matters. Anybody who says that he has found the technique of creating 30,000 jobs in south Wales has been carefully hiding himself in the bushes during the past 50 years. The regional policy has operated since the special areas legislation was introduced in the early 1930s.

It is possible to build accommodation for 30,000 jobs. However, that is quite different from finding the occupiers of those builders rather than the property speculators who put up the buildings. What businesses will they be? Where will they come from? Will they be local to south Wales? I am deeply sceptical about any estimate involving job numbers of about 10,000, 20,000 or 30,000. It is terribly easy to talk about those figures, but awfully difficult to demonstrate the reality which lies behind such estimates.

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): Is my hon. Friend ignoring the experience of the major towns and cities of south Wales during the past 20 years in which there has been inertia and expressions have been made against change? Experience has shown that, when areas have been upgraded, there has been an increase in jobs. Is my hon. Friend arguing for a continuation of the industrial slums which were widespread in south Wales during the past 50 years, some of which, unfortunately, still continue? Does not my hon. Friend see that such upgrading is of enormous benefit?

Mr. Morgan: I think my hon. Friend is arguing that Hermann Goering was the greatest contributor to comprehensive redevelopment that we have ever seen in this country. It is inappropriate to say that while standing in the Chamber of the House of Commons which he successfully bombed in May 1941.

Most of the jobs that have been created in south Wales have been created on green field sites on the fringes of towns. The TSB in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) is on a classic green field site development and promises a large number of new jobs. I could also mention city centre developments such as NPI in Cardiff, which does not demonstrate that this proposition——

Mr. Flynn: My hon. Friend must see the other side of the coin which is that the creation of those jobs is at the expense of the destruction of old industries in unsuitable areas in which industry lived cheek by jowl with housing. There has been large-scale redevelopment, where much of the old pattern of industry and the bad examples of the past have disappeared to enormous benefit. Is not that what will happen when the Cardiff Bay barrage is introduced?

Mr. Morgan: My hon. Friend is talking about a new sort of religious concept whereby demolition and creation take place simultaneously. There are extreme risks in the notion expressed by my hon. Friend that sweeping things away is a creative procedure. The people who worked in the factories would not take that view.

Mr. Michael: Will not my hon. Friend acknowledge that there has been tremendous success through the redevelopment of the centre of Cardiff? The regeneration of Cardiff through programmes such as the Cardiff and Vale enterprise has encouraged local people to set up in business and makes us optimistic that we may continue to do better, rather than worse, than promised.

Mr. Morgan: I am not sure what that proves. Redevelopment in the centre of Cardiff is one thing, but the comprehensive redevelopment and change of use down in the Cardiff docklands—covered by the compulsory purchase order area in the Bill—seems to be entirely different.

Mr. Rogers: My hon. Friend should accept the arguments of his other hon. Friends that, undoubtedly, redevelopment will lead to new jobs. There is absolutely no doubt about that, and anyone who argues against the fact that this is one side of the coin would be wrong. Will my hon. Friend develop this point, as I am sure he would want to——

Mr. Morgan: Given half a chance I will.

Mr. Rogers: A large impounded lagoon is unlikely to create many jobs. The barrage is not required to create the jobs. What is required is a redevelopment of the docklands area of Cardiff which is already served by an extension of the motorway. I am sure that my hon. Friend is going to develop the point that it is not necessary to have a barrage to redevelop Cardiff. I support the redevelopment of Cardiff, but not a barrage.

Mr. Morgan: I was moving on to that point about 10 minutes ago.

The other unsatisfactory aspect of the new jobs issue is that in front of the House of Lords not a single investor other than those paid as consultants by the Cardiff Bay development corporation appeared as witnesses to give any support to the proposition that this redevelopment and barrage would create additional jobs or investment.

I shall turn to the environment and the possibility—I put it no higher than that—that the Bill, far from achieving its objective of improving the environment and thereby creating a more aesthetically pleasing environment for potential investors, could have the reverse effect. This point has already been alluded to in one of the innumerable interventions in my speech.

As far as I am aware, there is no dispute about the nature of the water that would be impounded by the barrage. It is generally accepted that the colour of the lake would alternate between green and brown, depending on the weather and the microbiological conditions. At no time of the year, and in no weather conditions, would it be blue or brilliant. The water would also be turgid.

The problem with impounding the Rivers Taff and Ely, in terms of distancing the Bill from the preamble, is that the water might, to use the modern American usage, be a turn-off for investors, rather than a turn-on. The reason for that is that the rivers Taff and Ely, almost throughout their length of between 20 and 30 miles, have sewage outlets, many of which are not mapped by the relevant monitoring authorities. As a result, their microbiological quality is extremely poor, but this is the water that would be impounded.

This will cause two problems. First, in the winter, the storm overflows from the joint sewers that handle rain water and sewage would lead to sewage overflowing the weir, whereas normally it would be below the weir. Storm

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conditions are by no means confined to winter in south Wales. Such an overflow would force sewage over the weir and into the Rivers Taff, Ely, Cynon and Rhondda, and their various tributaries.

Secondly, in the summer, treated sewage becomes a significant proportion of the water-flow. The National Rivers Authority has informed me that in a typical summer—let alone this summer, which was particularly dry—one third of the flow of the river Ely is treated sewage, as is one sixth of the flow of the river Taff. That is why at Radyr weir, in my constituency and near where I was born and brought up, the smell is similar to that I remember smelling 40 years ago as a small boy cycling along the edge of the weir. I am told by the NRA that that is a sign of how difficult summer conditions are for any impounded or semi-impounded body of water, such as Radyr weir.

This problem is made worse with a large body of water, with sunlight playing on its shallow parts. It is more than likely that as a result, every five or six years, there will be a major algal bloom and a probable major fishkill, thereby rendering coarse fishery virtually impossible. If that happens, there cannot be a biological control of the midge explosion that would probably also occur.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has been to Venice. It smells pretty nasty, but it is still an extremely attractive place.

Mr. Morgan: Comparisons with Venice are delightful, but I do not think that we can assume that the carry-over motion will do away with seven centuries of history in south Wales and northern Italy and give us an Adriatic environment.

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): I hesitate to intervene in this internecine warfare, but are we to understand that a democratically elected city council and a democratically elected county council, properly advised on all these matters concerning sewage—about which the hon. Gentleman is clearly an expert—have reached the conclusion that the Bill is a good thing? If so, why does the hon. Gentleman wish to overturn the decision of those democratically elected bodies properly advised? I am, in the true sense of the word, disinterested in the Bill, but I am not uninterested because there will be a Mersey barrage at some stage, and we shall have to go through the same sort of procedure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: One barrage at a time, please.

Mr. Porter: The House should know, because I have a right to vote and my constituency borders on parts of Wales, why the hon. Gentleman is opposed to these decisions.

Mr. Morgan: I understand why the hon. Gentleman was so hesitant about intervening. Had he been paying attention earlier, he would have heard me say that it was a sad day when the Opposition found themselves in such a difficult position. The Secretary of State has made a Mafia-type offer—an offer that one cannot refuse—to the two local authorities. It was that either they had an urban development corporation imposed on them with no local authority representation or there would be one with built-in minority local authority representation. Quite rightly—I offer no criticism of this—the councils chose the second option.

Just because one of those authorities is Labour-controlled and the other has a Labour majority in a hung council, we should not feel that we cannot speak on the issue or consider it. We are considering a germ of an idea produced by the Secretary of State and it is up to us to examine it thoroughly, regardless of the fact that a minority of the members of the UDC were Labour councillors and that—in my view, although there may be other views—the local authority has been severely inhibited in its ability to cope with the new information that has emerged about water quality. I was referring to that when I was interrupted for the 67th time. I find being interrupted restful. I am grateful for the sympathy of my hon. Friends. I could do with a glass of water, but I am all right.

Mr. Rogers: I will get one.

Mr. Morgan: Thanks.

I must make a point about the groundwater and the potential damage, which is closely related to the procedural issue that I raised when I began. There are questions about whether the Bill has been adequately prepared, given our knowledge about groundwater. Regardless of where the water came from, we need to look at whether Bills should come before the House when they have not been properly researched and when an offer is made to residents—the constituents of many of us—that they will be covered against the damage created by this project. We do not know how extensive that damage could be, or even whether the council is on the right lines in calculating what the groundwater damage is likely to be. There is a wide divide between geologists on this. Some of them take the view that a Mickey Mouse study has been done, to use the words of one geologist, who lives in Cardiff. It is felt that they have not even started to get the geological studies right because of the Mickey Mouse computer model.

In listening to the views of geologists, I have found that those who know the south Wales area well, who either live, work or were raised there, or educated there in geological faculties in universities, take the view that this has been inadequately researched. Those who are paid by the Cardiff Bay development corporation and have little experience of the local geological factors and in particular the odd combinations of rainfall and river flows and the nature of the aquifer under Cardiff, take the view that there is no problem.

Those geologists who have not been paid by the company—there are some exceptions—are concerned about the way that research has been done into what lies underneath Cardiff. There should be work on the aquifer and how that interrelates with rainfall and flood water conditions. Those who have much less experience of south Wales are for the plan.

I am extremely concerned about whether the Bill even begins to fulfil its preamble by way of being able to assure the people living in my constituency.

Mr. Rogers: My hon. Friend is right to bring up that point, and if he does not go on too long, I hope to do the same. As he knows, I am an engineering geologist by profession. Some of the information submitted in support of the Bill at various times to seek the support of hon.

Members—I refer to the glossy paper that I have with me—is riddled with inaccuracies. I advise my hon. Friend that those independent geologists who have examined the Wallace Evans report, as I have—people who have been involved and who know the situation as I do—see the report as having been prepared hurriedly and as being riddles with inaccuracies. Just over a year ago when the development corporation held a symposium in the Institution of Civil Engineers across the road and the same questions were asked, I later received the written affirmation that some of the surveys had not yet been completed.

Mr. Morgan: I defer to my hon. Friend's vastly superior knowledge of the geology of south Wales and elsewhere. My hon. Friend was not one of the geologists I was quoting, but his intervention further reinforces my argument.

In the last minute or so of my speech, I shall refer to the state that the Bill should be in if it were to deserve a carry-over. The thing that repels me most about granting the Bill a carry-over is simply the extremely corrupt and corrupting procedure by which it has arrived here from the other House. I refer to the fact that a Secretary of State can set up an urban development corporation and then, having retired from politics, become involved in a monitoring and regulatory body which has a vital set of decisions to make about water quality, which is critical to the success or otherwise of the Bill in achieving what is stated in its preamble, and that he can then get a directorship with a major company, which is easily the largest landholder in the area covered by the compulsory purchase order.

That is a preposterous situation, especially for Conservative Members. After all, the ABP company was a nationalised company which, in general, Conservative Members were extremely proud to privatise. However, in Cardiff it was renationalised with the setting up of the urban development corporation, which included the whole area of Cardiff docks in its compulsory purchase order. We then found that, following the acquisition of new directors, the company was to be privatised again and to be exempted from the compulsory purchase order procedure and that a profit-sharing formula was to be set up between the urban development corporation, the nationalised industry, and the former nationalised industry, ABP. That will cause deep misgivings to anybody involved with the compulsory purchase order affecting Cardiff docks. How can it make sense for a nationalised industry to be privatised, then renationalised in respect of its Cardiff docklands, and then privatised again?

All that I can say about the previous Secretary of State is that power is delightful, and absolute power is absolutely delightful. The carry-over motion gives us the chance to stop the process. I have already mentioned one defect in the Bill, which has plainly failed its MOT. Surely it is time that the House took it right off the road.

8.3 pm

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): I am very much encouraged by the debate and by the evidence that it is occasionally permissible to criticise or even oppose one's leader. Heaven knows, the private Bill procedure is cumbersome enough and I know that it can be objected to, but it is nowhere near as cumbersome as a public inquiry. However, that is rather like saying that Tantalus's job was an easy one compared with that of Sisyphus. The plain fact is that the combination of our procedures for dealing with private Bills and with public inquiries is one reason why we have such difficulty carrying through any great enterprise in this country.

Such difficulties remind me of the problems of trying to pass the Soviet driving test in the good old days before glasnost when I was at the embassy in Moscow. During the two years I was there in the 1950s, nobody succeeded in passing the Soviet driving test. There was always some point on which one could be made to fail.

It has emerged that Opposition Members are somewhat divided in their attitude to the merits of the Bill and to the acceptability of the carry-over motion. By and large, the opposition comes, as it obviously would, from those hon. Members whose constituencies will not benefit. I say straight away that my constituency will not benefit from this scheme in any way. Cardiff is a long way from us in north Wales. It takes a long time to get there. Indeed, it takes a lot longer to get to Cardiff than it does to get to London or Birmingham, and it certainly takes a great deal longer than it does to get to Liverpool.

My constituents are much more concerned about the horrible things that are being done in Liverpool bay, where sewage is being dumped all over the place and is being washed up on our beaches. My constituents believe that far too much fuss is made about south Wales, where people persist in playing football with a ball that is the wrong shape.

Therefore, it is not on constituency grounds that I support the Bill. I support it because this is an imaginative scheme that will make Cardiff one of the most exciting and beautiful cities in the world. In the long run, what is good for Cardiff must be good for Wales and what is good for Wales will in the end be good for my constituency.

It is a national failing that in Wales and in the United Kingdom as a whole, except at moments of supreme national peril, we are unable to rise to the level of events. I cite in evidence most of the reactions to the momentous events in eastern Europe. I cannot conceive of the kind of debate that we have had so far taking place in the French or German Parliaments. The debate is befugged with parish pump and other procedural objections. France and Germany are used to great national undertakings. One can see the evidence when one visits Paris. Although some people may regret some of the recent constructions of President Mitterrand and Mr. Chirac, undoubtedly the citizens of Paris now take great pride in them, however much they may have argued at the time.

The reluctance of the British Government and people to think big has been well exemplified in the debates on the Channel tunnel. The consequence for us in Wales is that we will not get the maximum benefit from the tunnel because of our petty-minded approach to the construction of the road and railway systems that are necessary to ensure that the benefits of the tunnel are spread throughout the country. Witness in contrast the attitude of the French Government, who are building roads and railways to ensure that the prosperity of the tunnel is conveyed throughout northern and western France.

I know that there are valid doubts about the barrage scheme and that people are worried about the effect on bird migration—I believe that those worries are overstated—and about the effect on the micro-climate. I have some doubts, too, about whether the quality of the architecture will match the boldness of the concept. However, by and large it seems a bold and imaginative scheme. It will create

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jobs and make Cardiff one of the great cities of the world. I am glad to be here to support the Bill and the carry-over motion.

8.7 pm

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): First, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) on the way in which he presented his case. I know that he has worked hard with the promoters and that he has a close relationship with individuals on the development corporation and in south Glamorgan. We all recognise that in presenting the Bill he is performing what he sees to be his proper duty. Needless to say, I disagree with almost all that he said.

My hon. Friend said that there were two important elements to his case: first, jobs; and secondly, the environment. His case on jobs was that the barrage was necessary because it would create jobs not only during its construction, but in terms of the opportunities for development. That is his case and that of the development corporation and the county council. Indeed, I understand that it was the subject of much detailed examination in the House of Lords and that their Lordships came to the conclusion that the case had been proved.

I am not convinced of that. I have examined the evidence that was presented to the House of Lords, and it remains an assertion that the construction of the barrage will per se provide an attractive opportunity for private capital to come in, to the tune of £1 billion, and provide all the job opportunities that my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. Powell) suggested. That is bunkum. There is no evidence to support that assertion. I have questioned closely the people involved in the development corporation, including the chairman and the chief executive. I have asked for evidence. I have asked those concerned to name one company that is prepared to say, "With the barrage I will come. Without it I will not come." The development that has taken place, in Cardiff in the past 12 to 18 months is evidence that the barrage is not necessary.

We want to see the redevelopment of Cardiff, as my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) said, and the opportunities of the docklands properly developed. We appreciate that the motor for that must be public expenditure and, because we support that, we applaud and welcome the initiatives of the past 18 months.

Those new developments precede the barrage. Although it is well known in south Wales that there are major objections, to the barrage, those investments have still taken place because people have said, "We are prepared to invest even though the barrage might not eventually be developed."

My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth and I have a different understanding of the word "environment", as will emerge during the debate. He is concerned with the environment in terms of opportunities for its enjoyment by individuals—new housing, schools and social facilities. In other words. he is thinking of the enjoyment that would be derived from looking out across the lake, which my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) described as varying in colour between green and brown. That is the environment as my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth understands it, and he believes that the construction of a barrage would enhance the environment. I disagree with him.

Numerous letters that have circulated among hon. Members have said that we are considering essentially a Labour case, and it is a pity that the hon. Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Porter), who made that point, is no longer in his place. My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth has written to hon. Members, as has Lord Brooks of Tremorfa, saying that this is a Labour initiative. The letters are freely available, so I will not quote them.

I wish to make it clear, especially to some of my hon. Friends who may be undecided about which way to vote on this issue, that this is not a Labour party scheme. My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, West pointed out that the scheme was the brainchild of Nicholas Edwards. He conceived it, set up the development corporation and developed a sweetheart relationship with south Glamorgan. I appreciate why that occurred. He has got south Glamorgan to present the case and, politics being what it is, those concerned have worked hard and have got support from the TUC and some of the party organisations in Cardiff.

But for every unit of the party supporting the scheme, at least one other opposes it. So if there is a Labour involvement in the scheme, the opposition to it is being led by the Labour party. Three of the four constituency parties in Cardiff oppose it. My county council of mid-Glamorgan was not even consulted about the scheme, despite the major regional impact that it would have. It was horrified by some of the implications.

My district council area of Rhymney valley, which is Labour controlled—we do not even see a Conservative candidate at election time—is opposed to it. With one exception, all Members who represent the valleys are opposed to it. In other words, if there is a Labour involvement, the Labour party and the environmentalist lobby are leading the opposition to the scheme.

Mr. Michael: My hon. Friend makes a good case for the virility of the Labour party in being able to debate issues strongly in local communities in south Wales, and he is right to emphasise that. The Labour county council took the initial risk of the investment to build the new county headquarters and Atlantic wharf. They took that risk at an early stage and everything else has followed from that investment. That is why the scheme has been described as a Labour initiative.

Mr. Davies: If it was that much of a risk, I am sure that those concerned would have been surcharged by now by the district auditor. We appreciate what my hon. Friend says and we applaud what south Glamorgan has done. But it is not south Glamorgan's scheme. It is Nick Edwards' brainchild and those hon. Members who were here before 1987 know what Nick Edwards was about. He was concerned with the exploitation of the environment in his involvement in multinational mining companies. As far back as 1972 he was christened "Globtik Nick" because of his involvement in attempts to improve the marine environment in west Wales, when his companies were polluting our natural environment. He has now opted out, and is chairman of the National Rivers Authority.

I believe that the barrage will fail, and perhaps we should make it clear that our objective is to kill it. Let no

one be in any doubt about that. I believe that it will be discredited as the measure proceeds through Parliament, and I shall ensure that every possible method of objection is used during its passage through the House. I believe that either the funding will be withdrawn and it will be seen to be unrealistic, or that in two or three years' time a Labour Government will withdraw funding from the scheme. Whatever happens tonight and whatever happens to the Bill, the barrage will never be built.

If the barrage is built, it will go down in history as a monumental folly. In the 1960s the experts told us that we could solve our housing problems by building high-rise intensive developments on green field sites in the valleys of south Wales. Not one Member who represents the valleys could fail to give examples of such estates to show how we now recognise the mistakes that were made in the 1960s. The experts told us then that that was the way to regenerate. Indeed, for the past 30 years the so-called experts have been telling us about the importance of nuclear power. We now recognise what a monumental folly nuclear power has been. The barrage is the latest instalment in that series of mistakes.

I urge hon. Members to ask themselves, as they vote on this issue, how they will justify to future generations—we are all family people—giving support to a scheme which took an area classified as having the highest environmental value and destroying it to create at best a lake of dubious value for no economic justification, simply to provide glitzy housing, which is how the scheme is described by the South Glamorgan promoters. The chief executive of South Glamorgan has gone on record as saying that the scheme is about glitzy housing.

Presumably the philosophy is that we could have the barrage and the lake, and then the developers could arrive to build Barratt and Wimpey homes, thereby providing glitzy housing so that the yuppies can flood into Cardiff, live in those nice little houses looking over the lake and thereby bring economic regeneration to the heartland of Cardiff.

How shall we justify that to generations yet unborn, when the price that we are having to pay for it is the destruction of a vital part of our environment? Such beliefs have no values other than those of materialism. They have no objectives other than consumption. They consider no obligation to the wider community and they recognise no responsibility to future generations. That is why we oppose the motion.

There has been no evaluation of the environmental costs. My hon. Friend the Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells) and I have intensive quarrying interests in our constituencies. When we are told about the environmental impact of the scheme, we are entitled to ask where the materials for it will come from. Clearly, they will come from our constituencies. The developers will rip the heart out of Garth woods, another site of special scientific interest, to get the building materials they need. They will rip the heart out of the limestone and sandstone quarrying areas of the valleys to construct the barrage.

Dr. Kim Howells (Pontypridd): Could that be the reason why Mid-Glamorgan has refused permission for the quarrying company in question to extend its quarry, whereas South Glamorgan council has deferred making a decision on the quarry, possibly until the end of this and similar debates?

Mr. Davies: My hon. Friend makes a telling point.

Professor Pearce had a message for us when he presented his report to the Government in the summer. I would be happy for the barrage scheme to be evaluated along the lines of the principles which Professor Pearce suggested. There would then be an evaluation of the true environmental costs. It would put a value on the energy consumption of such a scheme, on the raw materials used and on the alternative projects that could be developed. If the barrage was being provided for reasons of overwhelming national importance or even overwhelming regional importance, or if there were proven reasons for the regeneration of Cardiff, we would have to consider our position. However, the arguments for the barrage are specious. It is simply to provide an opportunity for glitzy housing and we are entitled to say, "Look at the environmental costs."

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South) *rose*——

Mr. Davies: Many hon. Members want to participate in the debate and I hope to reach a rapid conclusion.

Mr. Cryer: I assure my hon. Friend that the Bill has not gone unnoticed in Bradford. A constituent of mine who is a member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has urged me to examine the Bill. She is also concerned about the environmental impact of the Bill upon birdlife in her area. Perhaps my hon. Friend will comment on that because she has expressed great anxiety in cogent terms. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Davies: I can hear muttering among the natives; my hon. Friends obviously think that there is a fair chance I will come to the question of birdlife.

I should like to put on record the view of the RSPB:

"The RSPB, and other wildlife conservation bodies including the Glamorgan Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for Nature Conservation, are opposed to the barrage proposal since it will permanently flood the intertidal lands that provide important feeding grounds for 5,000-8,000 wild birds which regularly use Cardiff Bay in Winter.

Cardiff Bay is of high wildlife importance and has been notified, by the Nature Conservancy Council, as a Site of Special Scientific Interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

In biological terms, the bay is an integral part of the wider Severn estuary which is of international importance for shelduck, redshank, knot and dunlin and meets the criteria for protection under the European Community Directive on the Convervation of Wild Birds and the Ramsar Convention on the Conservation of Wetlands."

Therefore, we are talking about a site of special scientific interest. This is the first occasion since the Wildlife and Countryside Act was passed that we have had a Government-sponsored scheme that will destroy, in its entirety, a site of special scientific interest—*[Interruption.]* I can hear my hon. Friend the Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) muttering away. As I said, this is the first time that a Government-sponsored scheme has proposed the destruction of a site of special scientific interest in its entirety. I am concerned because there may be other such proposals in the future.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth might say that, although it is a site of special scientific interest, there are overriding conditions and therefore we must sacrifice it. If we do not object to this proposal, hon. Members will not be able to object to the next one or the one after that. The principle must be established that a site of special scientific interest is just

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that. We do not assess it—that decision is made by the Government's specialist advisers—so who are we to say that we should sacrifice this site? If we do so, we will have to be prepared to sacrifice all the others.

Mr. Michael *rose*——

Mr. Davies: Let me get on a little further.

We have international responsibilities towards wildlife. We all hold up our hands in horror at the destruction of the rain forests in South America. We all make the case for the preservation of the African elephant and we argue for the wilderness of Antarctica. However, if we expect others in this world of ours to recognise their responsibilities, we have to recognise ours.

Our islands have a unique environment. We have broad ice-free estuaries which offer a unique opportunity to the migrating wildfowl throughout the north Atlantic. That is our contribution to international conservation. If we want to argue that others should fulfil their responsibilities, we must put our hands on our hearts and recognise our international responsibilities. We are bound by our commitment to Europe and an international convention to protect this area, yet we are proposing to destroy it to build glitzy housing.

Mr. Flynn: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Davies: Yes, but this must be the last time.

Mr. Flynn: My hon. Friend does not recognise the likelihood that if one habitat is interfered with, the birds will find alternative habitats. That happens along the estuary where a large habitat—Collister Pill in Magor—was destroyed by drainage patterns. The birds in the Severn estuary found alternative habitats. Does my hon. Friend agree that the relative population of the birds in the estuary—I understand that it is less than the bird population in Chichester harbour—is light? There are big mud flats and wetlands on both sides of the estuary and the birds, which are more robust in finding alternative habitats than has been suggested, would find them. My hon. Friend is taking a pessimistic view of the likely result.

Mr. Davies: I do not wish to be unkind to my hon. Friend, but I am appalled at his lack of understanding of the issues. The RSPB has studied the matter carefully.

Mr. Flynn *rose*——

Mr. Davies: My hon. Friend has had his say. The RSPB has made it clear that there is no spare capacity and birds cannot move on to the next convenient harbour.

If the Bill is passed and the barrage is constructed, we will be removing a habitat and would kill the migratory wildfowl that depend on the harbour just as surely as if we were shooting or poisoning them. The irony is that if we were shooting or poisoning them, there would be uproar.

Mr. Flynn *rose*——

Mr. Davies: I must continue. My hon. Friend has had his say and his view was not accepted by the RSPB.

Mr. Flynn: The society did not respond to my letter.

Mr. Davies: If my hon. Friend has not received replies from the RSPB, he must take it up with the society.

I draw my hon. Friend's attention to the view of the Nature Conservancy Council. It is independent and objective. It petitioned against the Bill when it was presented to the House in 1987, and it is now further resolved in its objections to it—*[Interruption.]* Hon. Members should go away and find out the facts. The Nature Conservancy Council is opposed to the Bill because it thinks that we are abdicating our international responsibilities.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth introduced the motion, he suggested that both South Glamorgan and the development corporation would look for an alternative site. I understand that they have done that, but I have to destroy that hope in case hon. Members might think it a possibility. They are proposing to scoop out the lagoon up the estuary from the bay. It is only 10 per cent. of the size of the tidal mudflats that will be destroyed. Given the habitat around the margins, in terms of providing alternative feeding grounds it will be virtually useless.

There are two other considerations. No one yet knows how to construct alternative feeding grounds. They will be unable to construct the unique environment that currently exists in the bay. It is washed at high tide and drained by two rivers bringing in high levels of nutrients to fertilise the mud and provide the invertebrates on which the birds will live. They do not know how to do that. They say that we should maintain it. In practice, that means that every year or two someone will come along—presumably in a JCB—to scoop out the mud, dump it in the Severn estuary and say to the birds, "There's your environment back." It is nonsense to suggest that. If South Glamorgan or the development corporation are serious about providing alternative habitats, they must come up with something better than what has been proposed so far.

I conclude by expressing the hope that the argument——

Mr. Barry Porter: Shortly.

Mr. Davies: I could continue for a long time. The hon. Gentleman intervened earlier and I replied to his point. He did the House a discourtesy, however, by leaving his place. I can do without his churlish interjections from his seat below the Gangway on the Government Benches.

I do not want to turn the debate into a valleys versus Cardiff confrontation. I know that all my hon. Friends who represent constituencies in the valleys oppose the Bill, and I hope that they will have the opportunity to speak against it.

Mrs. Llin Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Davies: I shall not give way to my hon. Friend. I do not wish to be discourteous to her, but she represents a constituency a long way from the areas that will be affected by the Bill. I know that she has a long family tradition in my constituency, but she knows that in this place we represent the constituents who elect us. We speak for the people who elect us, not the people whom our fathers or forefathers represented.

Mrs. Golding: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Davies: Very well.

Mrs. Golding: I am from the Welsh valleys. I was brought up in the valleys and I lived in the area for a long

time. I worked in Cardiff and I worked at Cardiff bay at the Hamadryad hospital. I saw the environment in which people worked. I do not forget. My memory is long. I am proud of Cardiff and I hope that the Bill will be carried. I want Cardiff to be a city of which we can all be ecstatically proud.

Mr. Davies: I was right in my initial judgment not to give way to my hon. Friend. She presented us with an interesting anecdote, but nothing more. As I said, we represent the constituents who elect us. I accept that my hon. Friend has a history of contact with the south Wales valleys, but she represents an English constituency and she must speak for that constituency.

Mrs. Godling: Will my hon. Friend——

Mr. Davies: Be quiet, Llin, and give the rest of us a chance.

I do not want to turn the discussion into a valleys versus Cardiff argument. I recognise that Cardiff is the capital of Wales, and we respect Cardiff as the regional capital. It is the regional economic and financial capital for us in the valleys. We want it to prosper and we shall support any measures that will allow the regeneration of derelict uplands and bring renewed prosperity to the valleys. It is folly, however, to believe that that can be done at the expense of our natural heritage. To believe that is to make a monumental mistake, but that is what the Bill proposes. Those issues have not been addressed in the Bill's passage through Parliament. That is why I believe that we should call a halt to this nonsense.

8.34 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): The House will appreciate how much I, as a Cardiff Member, should like to participate in the debate. In the circumstances, I think that it would be more helpful if I were briefly to state the Government's position.

The Government have a substantial interest in the Bill's objectives, as it is the intention that the cost of building the barrage will be met by the development corporation, with the assistance of grant in aid provided by the Welsh Office. The proposal clearly raises many important economic, technical and environmental issues, and these have given rise to understandable concerns that will need to be considered properly and carefully. The best way of doing that is surely to allow the Bill to proceed to the new Session.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): The Minister cannot just resume his place——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. As I understand it, the Minister has resumed his place.

Mr. Rowlands: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Minister intervened as a Minister of the Crown and not as a Cardiff Member. He stated that the Government and his Department have a substantial interest in the Bill, inasmuch as the Department will produce the grant for the development corporation. The Minister has not told us anything about the cost implications for central Government expenditure. Surely he has a duty to the House to make an estimate of the cost implications. It is a matter of considerable concern.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I might call the hon. Gentleman if he wishes to make a speech.

Mr. Rowlands: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It is not a point of order. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to make a speech, I shall call him.

8.36 pm

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): I would be sad if hon. Members should interfere, in a sense, in what is essentially a discussion between colleagues in south Wales and introduce bad temper. We are anxious to resolve an honest difference of opinion that affects our constituencies in different ways. We do not need lessons from anyone on how we relate to Cardiff. Those of us who live in valley constituencies have recently had to undergo dramatic experiences as a result of the contraction of the coal industry. We are most anxious, therefore, that all schemes in south Wales that will provide jobs are undertaken.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) was right when he said that many people travel from the valley communities into Cardiff. Indeed, the wealth of Cardiff was built on valley constituencies. That was done at the time when the father of my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) was the branch secretary of the Penallta colliery. As a miner and union official, he contributed substantially to the well-being of my village, which is where my hon. Friend was brought up. That is one example of why we do not want a bad-tempered discussion.

It must be accepted that there are valid objections to the Bill. I am in favour of the development of south Cardiff and the docklands. There are no ifs and buts about that. However, it is utterly beyond me to understand why a barrage has to be built. If a minor barrage were built near the Hamadryad hospital, for example, extra land would be available to add substantially to what is in the docklands, but the building of the proposed barrage would not add one acre on which factories or offices could be built. It would provide mooring spaces for boats in a marina. A knock-on effect on the valleys was mooted at one stage, but I cannot visualise many people from the Rhondda rushing to park their boats in a marina in Cardiff.

After all, we are Barry boys. When I was a young kid, the best trips I had were one from the chapel and one from the club down to Barry. I suppose that from now on the people from Rhondda will be going to Cardiff to sail their boats from the Marina. If an argument can be advanced that there is a shortage of mooring places in south Wales, I shall support the Bill on that basis. That argument is not advanced, but many others are.

I began to be interested in the Bill when I was invited to attend a symposium of the Institution of Civil Engineers. As an engineering geologist, I received the accompanying technical document with personal interest. I went to the symposium and met a finely collected bunch of people. The previous Secretary of State for Wales, Lord Crickhowell, was there as a sort of appointee. He held forth and entertained us extremely well. I am not complaining about that. Towards the end of the meeting I got up and asked what I thought were reasonable technical questions. Thereafter I was assailed for daring to speak out against the project. I was accused of being valley-minded. Some people who have left the valleys think that that

[Mr. Allan Rogers]

means small-minded, but we who live in the valleys with our great traditions of culture take pride in being called valley minded.

I thought that something wrong was going on, so I asked the Cardiff Bay development corporation some questions. Before ever there was any talk about birds or the RSPB, I wrote to the corporation in all good faith asking about the surveys. Back came the answers: they were not finished. I asked about groundwater and hydrological surveys; they were not finished either. The geological surveys had not been finished. In other words, the whole civil engineering part of the Bill was predicated on surveys that had not been carried out or had been inadequately carried out.

I would not object to carrying over the Bill if my fears had been satisfied, but they have not been. To be sure, a comprehensive report was done by paid consultant geologists or civil engineers. These independent experts have driven a horse and cart through some of the arguments, which do not stand up to examination.

I began to become a little suspicious about what was driving the motor, so I thought I would take a look at the engine. Then I received an invitation as, I am sure, did other hon. Members. I remember when Associated British Ports brought in a Bill and laid on a champagne supper for Conservative Members who bothered to turn up to support the company. The promoters of this Bill have gone further. Any hon. Member who would like to visit Cardiff can be looked after and can stay the weekend there at the expense of the promoters.

Mr. Terry Patchett (Barnsley, East): Why?

Mr. Rogers: The company has written to every Member for Parliament offering to pay their expenses while in Cardiff. This puts the validity of the Bill in question. I am sure that none of my hon. Friends would be a party to such corruption, although I do not know about Conservative Members, who take a slightly different attitude to these matters.

I am not against the development of Cardiff docklands——

Mr. Barry Porter: If this is all as daft as the hon. Gentleman says, does it not follow that most of the members of Cardiff city council are daft and incompetent, that South Glamorgan county council is daft and incompetent and that at least half of his hon. Friends who represent south Wales are daft? I find that terribly difficult to believe.

Mr. Rogers: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has links with Associated British Ports, but I am worried about his interests in this matter—it is rather unusual for him to be here at this time of night.

I have reservations about some of the people involved with the Bill. For instance, Lord Crickhowell was the initial promoter of the scheme, and his peculiar position in all this has already been described by my hon. Friends. He browbeat the county council and the city council by telling them that they were going to have this urban development corporation—with or without local government representation. It is only fair to point out that it took what was on offer. Then the noble Lord became the chairman of the the National Rivers Authority. One of the problems about the barrage is that it could lead to pollution in a quantity that no one has yet properly surveyed. The Taff and Ely rivers drain in behind the barrage, the Taff combining with the Rhondda and other tributaries. These are two of the fastest rising rivers in the United Kingdom.

I am not a civil engineer or hydrologist, but I have been involved in such schemes and I know enough to realise that there are doubts about whether this scheme, as proposed, will allow the pollution to be taken away. Lord Crickhowell is a director of Associated British Ports, which is strange, when we consider that the main beneficiaries of the scheme and the main land owners in Cardiff bay are not the local authority—Labour-controlled or otherwise—or the people of Cardiff but Associated British Ports, which owns at least 160 acres. So the previous Secretary of State, Lord Crickhowell, originally promoted the scheme, then became chairman of the National Rivers Authority and is also a director of Associated British Ports. If he carries on in these circles he might well disappear—if he does, I suggest that the seagulls mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) may help him to do it.

The people of Cardiff want jobs, and it is certain that my constituents will also work in the project, but there is plenty of land where the dockyards are now. The vice-chairman of the development corporation, Lord Brooks, and I go back many years, to the time when the docklands consisted of a vibrant community of mixed races and cultures. He has been closely associated with the area and wants to develop it in the same way as does my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael). We do not disagree. I do not think that jobs going to Cardiff will be taken from the valleys.

Mr. Michael: Does my hon. Friend agree that the House of Lords Select Committee accepted the economic argument for the necessity of the barrage; that the NRA accepts that its job is to ensure that the water quality is adequate and meets the requirements of the Bill; and that for that reason the Bill should be carried over so that these matters can be tested properly in Committee?

Mr. Rogers: Because the Bill is in such a bad state, it should be taken away and brought back. It is riddled with holes and inaccuracies. The Select Committee was very worried about the pollution from foul, untreated sewage and industrial effluents deposited in the bay by the rivers Taff and Ely. Swimming will be banned. Not so long ago someone fell off a raft in the middle of the Taff and died of Weil's disease, which is associated with rats' urine. That sounds like a case for the NRA. If the National Rivers Authority is so worried about pollution after the barrage is built it is about time it became worried now because there are already great problems of pollution.

I have grave doubts about the need for the scheme. The only argument in favour of the barrage is that it will provide a waterscape to attract business and housing—in other words, we cannot have a factory in south Wales unless we provide a marina; we cannot have houses unless we provide a marina. The Government continually say that they are doing wonders for the south Wales economy and have attracted new industries to it. But the Cardiff barrage has not yet been built, so why is it needed?

How much capital funding will be put into the Welsh Office? Will the Minister give us an assurance that that capital funding will come from the Government and not be

taken out of the allocation for Wales? If the barrage, which will provide a marina for yuppie boats, means that we cannot have vital infrastructure developments in the valleys where in some parts unemployment stands at 80 per cent., I will vote against the Bill all the way. However, if the Government intend only to finance infrastructure development in the dockland area, I will support it.

The Bill's promoters sent Members of Parliament a leaflet entitled "Groundwater. The Facts". That is a ridiculous parody of the facts. For example, it says:

"Groundwater does not rise above ground level so cannot flood streets and open spaces."

That simply is not true. Groundwater does rise above surface level. That is how springs come out of the side of mountains. Groundwater does come to the surface. The intersection of the water table and the surface means that water will issue. If the groundwater is raised sufficiently, it will cause flooding. The leaflet is nonsense. That is why the report commissioned by the development corporation is itself technological nonsense.

The leaflet goes on to ask:

"Will the barrage increase the risk of flooding?"

We should not forget that we are talking about thousands of ordinary people. My hon. Friends the Members for Cardiff, South and Penarth and for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) may argue about whose homes will be flooded, but I will vote against any measure that will flood just one home. In my constituency, because of the precipitate nature of water run-off, people are affected by flooding, and when filthy water and sludge goes into a house and destroys a home it is a traumatic experience for the people who live there. If thousands are affected, there will be a thousand traumatic experiences. We should bear that in mind. It is not a matter of saying that only a few people or a few birds will be affected.

Although there will be no floods, a flood warning scheme will be set up. The leaflet says that the

"Flood Warning Scheme will allow swollen rivers to be let out to the sea without adversely affecting water levels in the rivers."

There has been a reasonable estimate that the level of waters feeding into the barrage area will rise by at least 2 ft. The north end of Cardiff, west Cardiff and Cardiff Arms park have had substantial flood prevention schemes over the years because of the problems of flooding, but there will now be flooding from below, not necessarily from surcharge over the river banks.

Mr. Michael *indicated dissent.*

Mr Rogers: My hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth shakes his head. He does not even believe what the promoters say. He does not even seem to know his own documents.

The leaflet says that if a person's basement becomes damp, it can be filled in and a new damp-proof floor will be provided.

Mr. Michael *rose——*

Mr. Rogers: No, I shall not give way. *[Interruption.]* It is all right for my hon. Friend the Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) to mutter away. I am reading the promoters' hand-out. I shall pass it to my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth later.

Mr. Michael: Misrepresentation.

Mr. Rogers: It is not. The leaflet says:

"What is the present groundwater level? It varies throughout Cardiff but is much lower underground than in many parts of Britain."

That is a lie. Groundwater is much lower underground in many parts of Britain. Water tables in any area go up and down with the rainwater. In the summer they decline and in the winter they go up. Wherever there are rivers and streams there is groundwater. There is no such thing as an average level. It is misleading to suggest that the groundwater level in Cardiff is much lower underground than in many parts of Britain.

The document is open to question, but those are the facts on which the Bill went through the other place. A report from Wallace Evans for the consultants has been quoted. It is entitled, "Groundwater investigations. Final report. First issue, April 1989." That is riddled with inaccuracies. I am not saying that the problems cannot be overcome, but there is no need for them.

Cardiff can have its development. The development corporation can have its development. Jobs can be brought to the area and houses can be built. But there is no need to block up two river mouths. It will provide only a waterscape and parking space for boats.

Penarth is one of the most beautiful spots in south Wales. Many of my constituents go there at weekends. They visit Barry and the Vale of Glamorgan. Why spoil it for the sake of providing a parking space for boats?

8.58 pm

Dr. Kim Howells (Pontypridd): I fully understand right hon. and hon. Members' desire to do something for the docklands of Cardiff. It is one of the most devastated areas in Wales. Moreover, it suffered badly from architectral and sociological scarring in the 1960s, when some other bright promoters had an idea about modifying the docks in a particular way. They thought that they had the answer to all the troubles of the area by putting the population there into high-rise blocks, and we are still paying the price for that innovation. That was a terrible crime against the area and I hope that the House will bear it in mind when it comes to make a decision.

I must declare a direct interest in the matter. The proposed barrage is designed to trap the River Taff that flows past my front window—after which we are all named. I know the River Taff well. As a child I swam in its loveliest tributary, the Cynon. In its upper reaches, it was a beautiful Welsh stream, barely tainted by the collieries and works above it. However, three decades later, I doubt whether many parents who live along the banks of the Taff, the Cynon, the Rhondda, or any of the other tributaries, would relish their children even playing along the banks of the river, let alone swimming in it.

The river is now filthy. Its unkempt banks are festooned with all manner of discarded materials, from sanitary ware to leaflets promoting the virtues of the poll tax. They have been carried downstream to their temporary resting places by waters that are regularly subject to large infusions of raw and partly treated sewage from the treatment plants of the Welsh water authority—which, as has already been pointed out, was appointed by Lord Crickhowell in his previous capacity as Secretary of State for Wales. He now presides over the National Rivers Authority, which is supposed to ensure that companies such as Welsh Water clean up their operations and desist from fouling our streams and rivers.

I must admit that I have little confidence in the prospect of such clean-ups while the companies and authorities

[Dr. Kim Howells]

involved display more evidence of incest in their origins than did the Borgias. The so-called derogations granted to the water authorities by the Government mean that they can put off their clean-ups for considerable periods of time. Meanwhile, stinking flows the Taff. miserable are the views that it provides, and scientifically fascinating is the quality of its water and the debris that it bears down to the proposed site for the barrage.

Let us take, for example, the phenomenon of discarded doors—not normally a species associated with the flora and fauna of our rivers and streams. The Taff is rich in these aquatic phenomena. Every time that the river rises—and in Wales it does so frequently—they float down from the fine communities of Merthyr, Aberdare and Rhondda, skipping across the flood waves of cream foam from the sewage works. The doors are evidence of the Welsh people's excellent preoccupation with the philosophy of recycling: they are often used as fences on allotments, which almost always back on to rivers. They are the only flat pieces of ground in the valleys. When the rivers rise, down come the doors; and where do they end up? If the barrage is built, they will end up upstream of it.

I am not suggesting that the Bill's promoters have made financial arrangements with allotment holders in an attempt to use the Taff in the way in which Canadian lumberjacks use their rivers, floating timber downstream in preparation for the construction of the barrage. Discarded doors would almost certainly not be the first choice of material for a dam designed to attract well-heeled tourists and the developers of luxury apartments to the vicinity, which is the Bill's intention.

What, then, will happen to those doors? Will they congregate on the surface of the new lake, and form a benign and ecologically desirable shield that will prevent the growth of stinking algae in the waters beneath—waters befouled by the sewage and rubbish that I have described? Or will the much-vaunted Cardiff Bay anti-pollution barge suck up them up along with the rest of the muck, offload them on to a mobile cesspit and cart the whole lot out to the Bristol channel, to dump them where all the rest of Welsh Water's sewage is dumped?

Some months ago, I spoke to a yachtsman at Pierhead in Cardiff about the currents that run along and through the estuaries of the Taff and Ely rivers—rivers that would be blocked by the barrage. The main problem, he told me, was not the currents, but the fear of having his hull smashed by a kitchen table.

With the Secretary of State's valleys initiative reputedly in full swing—although I have not seen much evidence of it along the banks of the Taff and the Ely in my constituency—the Welsh will be hard at work ripping out more doors and kitchen tables for replacement than ever before. Moreover, as our standards of living improve and our food consumption increases, the laws of nature will mean—as they often do—that sewerage systems will come under even greater pressure, and the rivers will receive an even more generous gift from the Welsh water authority's sewage outfall pipes.

Perhaps I am being too pessimistic. Perhaps I should urge the Bill's sponsors to approach the Prime Minister with a view to expressing a vote of confidence in the suitability of the Taff's waters for containment behind a barrage. My constituents would be only too glad to arrange a suitable location for the right hon. Lady to take a running jump into the Taff, and to show by that gesture that we have all worried far too much about the quality of the water in our most famous river. What better advertisement could there be for the barrage than a photograph of the right hon. Lady doing a crawl upstream towards the sites of the Abercynon and Merthyr Vale collieries, which her Government, in their great wisdom, recently closed? I shall oppose the construction of the barrage until I see that photograph —until I see the Prime Minister's running jump into our maltreated river.

I, and many of my constituents, want firm gurantees and detailed timetables as to how and when the Government intend to force their incestous children—the National Rivers Authority and the Welsh water authority —to clean up the Taff and the Ely. The luxury apartments and the office blocks can wait for their shimmering lagoon, just as we in the valleys, who live along the banks of those rivers, have to wait for recognition by the Government that civil pride and environmental health take precedence over speculative profiteering.

9.4 pm

Mr. Gwilym Jones (Cardiff, North): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Pontypridd (Dr. Howells). He has brought back some good humour to the Opposition Benches. I was worried that the warfare breaking out was too pronounced for the good of all hon. Members.

I support the carry-over motion. I have great enthusiasm for the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill. It is an exciting proposal, but I have one great reservation about it.

The purpose of the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill is to fulfil the Cardiff bay regeneration strategy which looks forward to the creation over 10 years of 30,000 new jobs, 3 million to 4 million sq ft of new office space, 5 million to 6 million sq ft of industrial and business units and 6,000 dwellings, about a quarter of which are intended to be low-cost housing—most desirable in south Cardiff and Cardiff generally. I should have thought that there would be a good measure of agreement among hon. Members about such a proposal.

In general, who would not be excited by a package for which all who are involved in it are working so hard? I have been involved with the scheme for quite a long while —both before I became a Member of Parliament and since. I have sought to consider very carefully all that it involves. No Bill has ever come before the House with better or fuller local support.

That is typified by Cardiff's evening newspaper, the *South Wales Echo*. It has written many exhaustive articles on the subject and has shown considerable enthusiasm for the project since its inception. Its municipal editor, Mr. Michael Thomas, went to Baltimore two years ago. When he returned he wrote truthfully, I believe, when he said that he had seen Cardiff's proposed future in Baltimore and that the future worked. The *South Wales Echo* has provided us with the only independent, professionally conducted survey of what Cardiff people feel about the redevelopment of south Cardiff and the barrage. It shows that twice as many people are in favour of the proposed development in south Cardiff, including the barrage, as oppose it.

I am afraid that I have to reject much of what the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) said, especially his implication concerning the Mafia-like activities of the

South Glamorgan county council and Cardiff city council. I should have thought that such strong criticism would have come much more naturally from me than from him. I promise him that I shall continue to criticise the South Glamorgan county council, Labour-controlled, and Cardiff city council, Labour-Liberal dominated, whenever that criticism is deserved, but on this occasion I do not believe that it is deserved. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Mr. Morgan: I said that I offered no criticism of the local authorities involved.

Mr. Jones: I am glad to hear the hon. Gentleman say that. I thought that he implied that he was very critical of what they had done. It was a criticism that I could not share. I repeat my assurance that I shall criticise them as much as they deserve whenever they deserve criticism, but on this occasion I offer a tribute, on a strictly non-political basis, to the Labour and Conservative leaders of South Glamorgan county council, Lord Brooks and Councillor Gareth Neale, who have been very full-hearted and thorough in pursuing the proposal. Equally, I pay tribute to the Conservative and Labour leaders of Cardiff city council—Councillor Ron Watkiss and Councillor John Reynolds—who played important parts in the discussions. It occurs to me that three of those are on the board of Cardiff bay development corporation, as is Councillor Paddy Kitson, who has played a significant role in the considerations of this matter.

Councillor Paddy Kitson stood for re-election in May. His ward and the one alongside are the wards most affected by the proposals. When he stood for election as the Labour candidate, as did his neighbour, they were opposed by anti-barrage candidates. Although I would not have voted for either of the Labour candidates, they were re-elected with resounding majorities even against the anti-barrage candidates, the Conservative candidates and the other candidates who stood against them. That is a significant demonstration of how local people feel about the role of their local councillors in the project and the worth of the barrage project and the redevelopment of south Cardiff.

Mention has been made of the involvement of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and his predecessor, and their support for the proposal. It is commendable and even admirable that Secretaries of State have been prepared to devote so much time and interest to giving their fullest support to such a proposal. Cardiff should be very grateful that they have supported all our efforts. I should add that perhaps the founding fathers of the proposals were my predecessor and the predecessor of the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael), Lord Callaghan and the late Michael Roberts. Their views on this matter were probably the original catalyst for the redevelopment of south Cardiff. By no means would I take credit for the project as solely a Conservative idea. The Labour party, Lord Callaghan and everyone else in Cardiff had been involved right from the beginning. It is an excellent example of political parties coming together to achieve real benefit for the capital city of Wales.

While I am seeking to pay tribute to those who have worked so hard, it would be entirely inappropriate not to mention those who have been involved on the professional side, particularly the chief executive of South Glamorgan county council, Mr. Michael Boyce, Mr. Iwan Humphreys and all the other officers of South Glamorgan county council, as well as Mr. Geoffrey Inkin and Mr. Barry Lane of the Cardiff Bay development corporation.

The relationship between the development corporation, the local authorities and everyone else involved has been a good one. That has been most important. It is quite right that the project was entrusted to a development corporation as the most appropriate way of moving forward. That said, it was inevitable that there should be some conflict and even dramatic moments in the press, but all has been happily resolved and the good relationship has been continuing.

It has been marked particularly by a willingness to accommodate every point of view and every possible problem that has been raised. South Glamorgan county council and Cardiff Bay development corporation have taken the lead in trying to identify the problems that have arisen with the south Cardiff redevelopment and the barrage proposal. The most comprehensive technical studies have been carried out and their findings have been met by a willingness to respond properly.

A particularly important clause is clause 12, which contains most important provisions for homes and for owners of property which might be affected by changes in the groundwater in Cardiff. The Cardiff flood action committee was equally inspirational in suggesting that such an important clause should be included in the Bill. That suggestion was immediately met, or anticipated, by a ready response from the promoters of the Bill.

The Bill provides for redevelopment with the barrage as its central feature. The barrage is fundamental for it brings about the greatest change to the landscape of south Cardiff. The mudflats at low tide are not an attractive feature. We have a rare opportunity to repair the effect of industrial change. How often we have to put up with industrial change and decay marking our landscape. The mudflats at Cardiff bay were created by the construction of Cardiff docks 150 years ago. The barrage will end those ugly and unattractive mudflats.

Mr. Ron Davies: Shame.

Mr. Jones: The hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) has had his say. I shall shortly express substantial agreement with what he said, but not on this point.

The barrage is a green proposal. Friends of the Earth opposed a marine development at Porthcawl because it did not include a barrage such as that proposed for south Cardiff. Its contention at the inquiry was that a barrage is essential to meet the forthcoming problems of the greenhouse effect.

Every possible attempt has been made to measure the worth of the barrage. In 1986, the Cardiff Bay development corporation commissioned Peat, Marwick, McLintock to carry out an independent appraisal of what the barrage can best be expected to achieve, not simply on a barrage or no-barrage basis but including the middle course of a mini-barrage. Peat, Marwick, McLintock estimated, on the best basis, that having no barrage as part of the south Cardiff redevelopment would attract £523 million of investment, that a mini-barrage would attract £607 million, but that the barrage would attract £1,051 million of private investment. It further estimated that no

[Mr. Jones]

barrage would generate 12,700 jobs, that a mini-barrage would generate 14,950 but that the barrage would generate 22,150 jobs.

Peat, Marwick, McLintock sought to measure that by comparing the amount of public sector capital being invested with private investment. No barrage would produce a ratio of private investment to public sector investment of 4·6:1, a mini-barrage would produce a ratio of 4·8:1, and the barrage 8·9:1. It next sought to calculate the net value of the proposal for the Cardiff area. No barrage would lead to greater expenditure than return and a loss of £61 million and a mini-barrage would lead to a loss of £113 million. The only positive return that it could identify was for the barrage, producing a return of £77 million. The study also showed similar declines in the residential sector, offices, industrial and business use and retail. It could even measure reduced achievement in the categories of leisure and open spaces, although the mini-barrage proposal produced less open space than no barrage.

That was an independent and persuasive appraisal. The economic case for the barrage is overwhelming, and it will be of much benefit to south Wales. We know from current studies that one third of the jobs in Cardiff are for commuters, most of whom live in the valleys. That is bound to be reflected in the new jobs created by the south Cardiff development. It will lead not to prosperity confined to Cardiff but to prosperity and worth for all south Wales.

In Cardiff and in the House tonight, many concerns have been expressed, such as concern about flooding. We in Cardiff all remember the flooding in 1979, when large parts of Cardiff were badly affected. Earlier in the 1960s there was flooding further afield that affected parts of my constituency in Gabalfa and Llandaff North. Time after time, it has been shown that the cause of flooding is the combination of heavy rain swelling the rivers and flowing down to Cardiff and meeting a high tide from the sea. Research shows that the barrage would assist in flood prevention because it would break the link between a high incoming tide and heavy rain flowing down the river. The concern about flooding is not a valid reason for not further pursuing the barrage.

The House of Lords Select Committee considered the quality of the water to be impounded behind the barrage and, in its kindly way, concluded that some of the more extreme suggestions—which we have heard again tonight—were unduly pessimistic. I suggest that hon. Members should look at the water at Atlantic wharf, if they have not already done so. That is an example, beside the new headquarters of South Glamorgan county council, of exactly the kind of water that will be present behind the barrage. It is not blue water, but we do not have blue water in Cardiff at the moment. It is not as bad as some of the water elsewhere, and it certainly defies the criticism that has already been made.

Mr. Morgan: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that lorryloads of algae had to be removed in early September from the Atlantic wharf water because the combination of sunlight warming the water and the high percentage of treated sewage coming down the river in the summer resulted in algal blooms and that that would occur on a much larger scale in the much greater impounded waters of the bay.

Mr. Jones: The hon. Gentleman is right to point out that fact. As we all know, the waters behind the barrage will be properly managed, with all the appropriate technology. I think that the hon. Gentleman is confirming what can happen when there is proper management, while at the same time disabusing us of the idea that there will be a polluted lagoon behind the barrage.

Groundwater is another major concern. There is a general measure of agreement on this matter. It is another example of the willingness of the Cardiff Bay development corporation to respond to all the problems. Appropriate provision for a protected property area is made in clause 12, but the clause goes beyond that matter. I am happy to see that my constituency of Cardiff, North is provided for in the Bill. It has been pointed out to me that the provision goes much further—in fact worldwide. It has been said that any citizen, anywhere, could make a claim to the Cardiff Bay development corporation that he had somehow suffered because of the creation of the barrage. That is certainly much further than a general provision in legislation.

The hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers), who is not in the Chamber, strongly criticised the leaflet published by the Bill's promoters. He suggested more than once that the leaflet contained lies and that the statement that groundwater did not rise was not true. I am not a geologist. I have to listen to what the hon. Gentleman says, but I am afraid that he does not convince me. I imagine that there must be percolation of groundwater, but surely groundwater must still obey the laws of gravity. As he said in his example, groundwater can emerge from a mountain, but that is because gravity causes the water to flow down inside the mountain. I have not seen mountains in south Cardiff.

The hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) was critical of the technical evidence before the House of Lords Select Committee. I understand that experts for the promoters and for the groundwater petitioners were called and that their evidence showed that there was only one matter of disagreement between them—that there had not been an opportunity within the period of the study to measure what happened during three or four days of heavy rain. Both groups of experts agreed that, even if the contention of the groundwater petitioners were true, there would be no effect beyond the protected property area, and that there was no need to extend it.

The House of Lords Select Committee fully considered this matter. I concur with the provisions which are outlined in the leaflet and the practical responses in terms of infilling and insulation. It is little wonder that the Select Committee's report said:

"The Committee concluded that Clause 12 does provide a comprehensive set of measures to deal with the effects of rise in groundwater and that the procedures embodied in the Clause were fair."

I have a great reservation—on which I find myself in some measure of agreement with the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies)—about the future of wading birds. In 1986, I expressed my concern in the House for the future of the site of special scientific interest. It is true that the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology has reported on the Taff-Ely estuary and has determined that it is not a site of international significance. The Royal Society for the

Protection of Birds, in its last publication, "The Complete Book of British Birds"—which was to celebrate 100 years of the RSPB—made no mention of the Taff-Ely estuary. The Institute of Terrestrial Ecology has said, however, that the site is of national significance. It has 1·2 per cent. of the British population of redshanks and dunlins. There is a risk of permanent loss and a need for compensation.

The SSSI is part of the Severn estuary SSSI, and while it is only 1 per cent. of the area, it includes 10 per cent. of the birds. The RSPB has told me that there are approximately 8,000 to 10,000 wading birds in the Taff-Ely estuary, and that the area is particularly significant for its redshank population. Redshanks are declining elsewhere in the United Kingdom, but thankfully, not in the Taff estuary, where the population of about 1,500 is staying firm.

I am glad that compensatory measures have been proposed in the Bill. That is an innovation which might be worthy of development elsewhere. They involve some 50 acres of land, at a cost of £3·5 million.

I understand that there will be discussions between the promoters of the Bill, the Nature Conservancy Council and the RSPB. Filling the barrage will take some weeks, and I hope that their discussions will also include the best time to fill the barrage, so that the best transition can be achieved.

My great regret is that no one can guarantee how effective the compensatory features will be. I greatly regret the likely loss of birds and the fact that we have to choose between the present and an uncertain future. I fervently hope that there will be progress towards a target of no loss.

So much time, effort and money has been put into the Bill that it would be a great tragedy if the motion were not passed this evening, and all that work were wasted. The important issues which must be given further consideration deserve to be put before a Select Committee of the House. I am confident that any new feature will be fully considered and that all those features we already know about will continue to have the fullest consideration. I hope that we can move forward, because I believe that the future is exciting.

9.26 pm

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): I have given a great deal of consideration to the Bill and to whether to support the carry-over motion. I made a final check with the National Rivers Authority this afternoon, and I feel that the information it gave me negated one of the principal reasons for building the barrage.

I did not intervene in the speech of the hon. Member for Cardiff, North (Mr. Jones) when he mentioned the independent opinion poll. It was commissioned by the *South Wales Echo*, which has supported the barrage from the beginning and so is hardly a disinterested observer. A fine opinion poll has been conducted in Cardiff, where 423 people were interviewed, 190 from the affected area, spanning an age range of between 18 and 70-plus, which parallels the age structure of the population. Just over 50 per cent. were women. The outcome of that survey was that fewer than 7 per cent. favoured the barrage, 36 per cent. wanted the area to be cleaned up and landscaped, 27 per cent. thought that there should be further development with an emphasis on a wildlife site, 48 per cent. were in favour of a smaller barrage and 13 per cent. selected other options.

Mr. Flynn: My hon. Friend suggests that there is a groundswell of opinion against the barrage. A number of candidates in recent elections stood on an anti-barrage platform. Can my hon. Friend say how many were successful? He has suggested that the *South Wales Echo* was partial in the poll which it published. How independent are the people who published the poll which he has mentioned?

Mr. Griffiths: I shall make no comment on the partiality of the people I mentioned, as I believe—the same is true of the *Echo*—that they have their own commitment and selected their sample in good faith. I do not think that that is an issue. I think my hon. Friend knows that it is rare for one issue to dominate an election, whether people stand for a political party or as independent candidates.

I shall move on to some of the substantive points. I oppose the private Bill procedure in principle. One reason for that is that projects carried through under the private Bill procedure are automatically excluded from the rigours of European Community directive on environmental assessment, so a proper environmental impact assessment based on the EC criteria cannot be made.

I have been approached on the matter several times and I was first approached on it when I was the Member of the European Parliament for South Wales, a constituency that includes Cardiff. I was especially struck by a letter from a friend who is an engineer and describes himself also as an angler, conservationist and ratepayer of Cardiff. He made several salient points about the whole scheme, and was especially upset that the promoters should have gone ahead with the Bill before they had completed the studies that were necessary to ensure that they could overcome the concerns expressed when news of the project first came to light. My friend mentioned problems such as environmental pollution, sedimentation build-up and difficulties for migratory fish, which I should have liked to deal with in detail on other occasions when I had more time.

However, I shall deal in a little detail with water quality. It seems that one of the main reasons why the barrage was mooted originally was to provide an area that would not only look nice, but would be a centre for water sports. Such a target is now impossible. When I contacted the National Rivers Authority this afternoon to find out its feelings about the barrage, it told me that although it would be possible to meet the E. coli coliform standard of the EC directive on bathing water quality, there would be huge problems with the microbiological quality of the water and specifically, the organism called leptospira, which carries Weil's disease which, as my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) mentioned earlier, is a killer. As a result, the National Rivers Authority, in conjunction with the environmental health department of Cardiff city council, has made it clear that it will allow no water contact sports in the lagoon created by the barrage.

Furthermore, when I questioned the experts at the National Rivers Authority, they said that there would be a problem in providing a reasonable quality of water that would even look acceptable, although it would not be safe for anyone to fall into it. Although the Bill provided for a scheme for water sports, there are question marks over the times of flooding. It has already been said this evening that the Taff and its tributaries tend to rise very quickly so that there are problems about the boom and the other provisions that are intended to take out debris and the sewage that makes its way down the river. I remind the

[Mr. Griffiths]

House that a sewage mains under the Taff once burst and for a time raw sewage flowed down the river. The problems of coping with the River Taff in spate and of removing the debris mean that the measures might not deal effectively with the problem.

Mr. Rogers: I assure my hon. Friend that raw sewage already enters the tributaries feeding the lagoon. The Welsh water authority is not renewing the trunk sewer systems in some of the valleys, so raw sewage enters the river.

Mr. Griffiths: I thank my hon. Friend.

I do not oppose the development of Cardiff docklands but, with all the problems associated with providing a lagoon, the purpose of which is no longer relevant because water quality is not right, I hope that we shall throw out the carry-over motion and ask the promoters, if they must come back with a new scheme, to do so without the barrage.

9.35 pm

Mr. Elliot Morley (Glanford and Scunthorpe): I am the only non-Welsh Member to have spoken so far in the debate. I wish to speak because I am an elected member of the council for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. I have taken a close interest in the matter, as has the society, which is Europe's largest voluntary organisation concerned with the matter. It has members in every constituency.

I have another reason for wishing to speak, which has nothing to do with the promoter of the Bill or the people behind it. The procedure on private Bills is a corrupt system which should be ended. The matter would be better dealt with by a public inquiry in Cardiff than by the House.

Normally, I would not wish to become involved in any issue that is mainly the concern of the people of Cardiff but, as has already been said, the bay is of national significance because of its value for wildlife and conservation. It is to that aspect that I shall address my remarks.

I accepted a kind invitation from the Cardiff Bay development corporation to meet it in Cardiff. I must add that I travelled there at my own expense, during my holidays. While I had a meeting with my hon. Friends the Members for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael) and for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan), my wife and family were let loose in Cardiff, which was of more benefit to Cardiff city centre than to me. I had an opportunity to see the problems at first hand, so I speak as someone who has taken the trouble to go to Cardiff and talk to the corporation to hear both sides of the argument.

Conservative Members spoke about mud, and my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth said that mud in Cardiff stinks. It may stink now, but that is caused by the sewage outfalls and effluents in the rivers Taff and Ely. Those effluents will be trapped behind the barrage if it is constructed. The scheme could be a potential asset to the city if the money for the barrage went instead to clean up the bay, landscape the area and maximise its attraction to wildlife.

I was taken down to look at the mud. The visit was carefully timed, so that I could see the vast expanses of mud at low tide. My guides said, "Just look at that." I thought that it was an attractive sight, but I accept that not everyone would share my view. I noted that there was a substantial housing development in Penarth dock. It was popular and the houses had sold well, even though they overlooked the mudflats. While there may be people who would not want to buy a house overlooking mudflats, many people would be delighted with the ever-changing scenery of a tidal estuary with the tide coming in and out, the ebb and flow, the birds' moods and the call of birds on the wing, which are all attractive. Some developers have made it clear that they do not need the barrage in order to build homes and attract inward investment. Some of the figures that have been quoted have been mathematical rather than relating to reality.

The displacement of bird species from Cardiff bay is of national importance to a number of species, particularly redshanks, dunlins and knots. It is not true to say that those species can simply move out of Cardiff bay and find a nice vacant mudflat in the Severn estuary. Those feeding areas are already occupied and would not take any more feeding species. The birds would either displace the species that are there already or, even worse, by competing for food in a reduced feeding area, ensure that none of the species on those feeding grounds would get enough energy. If there was a cold snap during the winter, it would be likely that large numbers of species would be unable to survive.

It is also likely that migrating birds which are travelling through the Cardiff bay area would be unable to feed adequately to build up their body fats for the migration. The mortality rate in the species could be greater than the present population.

A paper written by M. E. Moser, entitled "Importance of UK Estuaries for Waders and Wildfowl", bears out these points:

> "For example, the numbers of redshanks on the firth of Clyde crashed during the 1980s, probably as a result of a decrease in the available food resources. There have been massive declines in bartailed godwits, knots and dunlins on the Cheshire/Welsh Dee estuary".

When there is already a decline in species because of loss of feeding grounds and habitat, we cannot displace birds from Cardiff Bay and expect them to survive.

I pay tribute to the development corporation and to the hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth, who is genuinely concerned about these conservation aspects. The Bill's promoters deserve some credit for taking these matters seriously and trying to meet the genuine points which have been put forward by the conservationists.

The Wentloog proposal is interesting and radical in terms of providing an adequate alternative feeding ground. Unfortunately, at the moment there is insufficient information to determine whether it will be completely successful. I am not sure whether the enormous resources would be available to protect a site of this sort from the inevitable silting.

I realise that time is short, and this is a debate on the carry-over motion. If there is a Second Reading debate, I should like to expand these points. In terms of the carry-over motion, arguments from people such as me, conservation organisations and development corporations hinge purely on the barrage. The promoters should consider taking the Bill back to concentrate on the developments which we all support. The regeneration is

imaginative and practical for Cardiff, but we do not need a barrage; by abandoning it and transferring resources, we could create an even better and more successful scheme.

9.43 pm

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): Any hon. Member who speaks in a debate on a private Bill which appears, at least in its title, to be a local Bill, has to justify his or her intervention. There is one basic reason for an intervention: if the Bill has broader, national implications. My hon. Friends the Members for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) and for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) and other hon. Members who have spoken against the Bill have already shown that the significance and importance of this Bill transcends its apparently local character.

There has been an amazing omission in this debate and in much of the evidence taken in the other place. Another reason why the Bill is not just a local one is its huge and significant public expenditure consequences, which have not been explained tonight. That is why I reacted so violently when the Minister rose and sat down in 30 seconds flat, simply saying that the Bill would have substantial expenditure consequences for his Department. The House is being asked to pass a carry-over motion on a Bill whose public expenditure consequences have not been explained. I make no criticism of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Michael), who has enough to deal with in promoting the Bill and opening the debate on the motion, but except in one sentence, he did not mention public expenditure. As a valleys Member, I have a vested interest in knowing the overall sums, where the money will come from, what proportion will be paid by the ratepayers of south Glamorgan or of the city council and what proportion will come from the national purse—that is, the Welsh Office and its various agencies and bodies.

Mr. Michael: These are matters of considerable detail, and in coming to a conclusion, we should discuss the expenditure and match it with the benefit that will result. However, should not these matters be properly investigated by the Select Committee?

Mr. Rowlands: I am afraid that I cannot agree with the way that my hon. Friend has minimised the argument, by saying that all this can be dealt with in Committee. When public Bills are introduced, their financial implications are spelt out from the start. Attached to the original Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill was a financial memorandum, which contained the first information about expenditure that we were given. It is not attached to the Bills that we have now —it seems to have been taken off. It said:

"The Secretary of State for Wales and the Secretary of State for the Environment have said in a joint report to Parliament that . . . it would be the Government's intention that the cost of the barrage as at present estimated would be met by the Development Corporation with the assistance of a grant-in-aid provided by the Welsh Office."

In other words, this will be publicly funded by the Welsh Office. It continued:

"The expenditure on construction of the proposed works is estimated at £82,230,000. The expenditure on the acquisition of lands and easements for the works is estimated at £2,550,000.

We know that the initial public expenditure implications of the Bill, according to the financial memorandum, will be about £85 million. However, that is misleading because in the cross-examination of the promoters of the Bill in the other place, the figures turned out to be very different. There is an admission that a high level of public expenditure in the barrage site is essential to the scheme. The Minister, the promoters and certainly Tory Members, who have strong views about public expenditure, have to justify this level of expenditure. What is the expenditure to be? The cost of the barrage is estimated to be £113 million plus. Presumably, that will be substantially funded by the Welsh Office. Perhaps the Minister will intervene now and tell us what portion of that £113 million will be funded by the Welsh Office, as opposed to the county council or local government.

That is not the end of it. That is only a small proportion of the total public expenditure consequences of the Bill. Again in the evidence presented in the other place, we are told that in addition to the £113 million—not the £85 million in the financial memorandum—there is a land reclamation cost of £15 million. I have an interest in land reclamation schemes because my constituency has, I believe, the largest concentration of derelict industrial land, certainly in Wales and probably in the United Kingdom as a whole. There will also be depollution costs of £60 million and combined road schemes costing another £118 million.

Therefore, the total possible public expenditure consequences of the Bill, about which not one word has been said this evening and not a single figure given by the Minister, are of over £400 million. That is what, in another place, the promoters agreed were the total barrage plus infrastructure costs of the scheme.

The Minister is in dereliction of his duty to the House by not giving that information. Indeed, one principle upon which the parliamentary system was founded was the scrutiny and accountability of public funds. If there was no other case for opposing the carry-over motion, sufficient reason would be that until the Minister comes to the Dispatch Box to tell us what proportion of that £400 million-plus will be funded by central Government, as opposed to what might be raised by the ratepayers of South Glamorgan, the Bill should not proceed. It is all very well for local authorities to promote big, important schemes—we have all been party to this and have argued for and promoted them—but if the funds are to come not from local government, but from central Government, interest in the measure must transcend the boundaries of any one local authority. This is a matter of national interest. It is certainly of interest to the Principality to know where that £400 million-plus will come from.

I turn now to a point about which we have heard nothing. Again, I do not in any way blame my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth for this because he had a lot to explain at the beginning of the debate, and in the numerous interventions, cross-references and points of order, he might have overlooked telling the House this other fact. Despite the amazing appendix on the barrage's tremendous economic benefits, in City terms, the evidence that was submitted to the other place on the operating costs of the barrage estimated that the revenue from the barrage—the fees or whatever—will amount to £475 million, whereas the costs of operating the barrage will be £1·1 billion. Even according to the promoters, there will be a net operational loss of £652 million. Who will fund that? Will it be funded by the ratepayers or will the Welsh Office make an on-going contribution?

[Mr. Rowlands]

The Government want to carry over a Bill with capital expenditure consequences of more than £400 million and to include a net £600 million operating cost on top, yet we still do not know what proportion of that will be paid from central Government funds.

We have been told that Parliament has already thoroughly investigated the scheme and that the Bill has come down to us with the blessing of their Lordships. I have looked through the 16 volumes of evidence to try to find the answers to the questions that I have asked and which the Minister has failed to answer about the contribution from central Government funds. The best that one can find in the evidence is an exchange between Mr. Geoffrey Inkin, who I think is the chairman of the corporation, and the cross-examiners. At one point, the chairman of the inquiry asked Mr. Inkin:

"Do I understand that £250m will come straight from Government funding and the £150m will come from increased land values?"

The answer was:

"No, £75m–£125m. Is the sum, to be precise."

Well, £75 million to £125 million is certainly a precise sum. Mr. Inkin's answer continued:

"One is talking about a total sum of public funding of something of the order of £300m–£350m. There are additional sources of funding, but relatively minor key."

To the next question of

"That makes up the balance between £300m and £350m and the £400m?"

Mr. Inkin replied:

"Much of the balance of about £75m is in fact to go towards the cost of the peripheral distributor road which comes out of transport supplementary grant to the County Council. We may make a subscription on a proportion."

That is supposed to be the lucid evidence, given under cross-examination, that results in the Bill being given the blessing of their Lordships. As far as I can tell, that was the sum of the evidence covering the public expenditure implications of the Bill.

For no other reason, I beg hon. Members not to agree to the Bill being carried over, certainly not until we are given an effective assessment—a real financial memorandum—showing the true cost of the measure to the public and particularly to the national purse.

Perhaps the most telling argument of my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth—at any rate, in his view—was that we must not oppose major developments in view of the effect that our action might have on jobs and the future of the city. When reading the evidence given in this matter—I was in the Private Bill Office—I discovered that the chief counsel for South Glamorgan county council was a long-standing adversary of mine, a wealthy gentleman named Peter Boydell, probably the country's No. 1 planning QC.

The last time I saw Mr. Boydell in action was when he was advocating a grandiose city centre development for Cardiff. I was reminded of all the arguments that we heard, back in the late 1960s, when I was active—hon. Members will agree that I acted effectively—in opposing that grandiose scheme. Almost identical arguments to those now being adduced for the barrage scheme were made on that occasion, including the attempt to blackmail us into believing that more jobs were at stake, that the proposed hook road would solve the urban traffic problems of the city and that such a development, along with the creation of a huge shopping centre, was the only way for a capital city to develop.

It was to the good fortune of us all that that scheme fell and the hook road was not built. Instead there emerged the sort of development for which we were arguing—the organic development of the city. It has since developed in the way that we hoped. Today, Cardiff city centre is one of the finest of any city. That has happened not as the result of any grandiose scheme but for the reverse reason—because we turned our backs on huge developments and went for the sensible, progressive, organic development of the city.

There is a parallel between the change of attitude on that occasion and the consideration that we are giving to the barrage today. We rejected that grandiose scheme 20 years ago, and that led to the fine city centre that Cardiff now has. By saying no to the carry-over tonight, there will be a rethink of the whole issue, just as occurred 20 years ago. I hope that, following that rethink, there will emerge a consensus for the idea of a mini-barrage, which will overcome many of the objections that have been voiced on conservation grounds and which will not make the sort of demands on public expenditure that the barrage scheme would make.

It has been suggested that we should not make this an argument of valley versus the city of Cardiff. We do not want that to happen, but we are jealous of the relative proportions of public expenditure that is devoted to the city and to valley communities such as mine. The public expenditure consequences of the Bill and the large proportion of money that one suspects will come from Welsh Office funds make the Secretary of State's Valleys initiative look like an extremely meagre affair.

There are many reasons why the Bill should not be carried over, including the wider, broader national issues that have been mentioned. People who 10 years ago would have dismissed arguments about the needs of wading birds have now become aware of the enormous long-term significance of conservation——

9·59 pm

Mr. Michael *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question put, That the Question be now put:—

The House divided: Ayes 192, Noes 58.

Division No. 407] **[9.59 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard	Burns, Simon
Alton, David	Butler, Chris
Arbuthnot, James	Butterfill, John
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*	Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Ashby, David	Carrington, Matthew
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Carttiss, Michael
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony	Chapman, Sydney
Bell, Stuart	Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Bermingham, Gerald	Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Bevan, David Gilroy	Coleman, Donald
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter	Colvin, Michael
Boswell, Tim	Conway, Derek
Boyes, Roland	Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard	Couchman, James
Brazier, Julian	Cox, Tom
Bright, Graham	Crowther, Stan
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*	Currie, Mrs Edwina
Buck, Sir Antony	Curry, David
Budgen, Nicholas	Davis, David *(Boothferry)*

Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Duffy, A. E. P.
Durant, Tony
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Foster, Derek
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Harris, David
Haynes, Frank
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Irvine, Michael
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McFall, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McWilliam, John
Mans, Keith
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Murphy, Paul
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parry, Robert
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robertson, George
Rost, Peter
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'caster)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Gwilym Jones and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Hinchliffe, David
Hood, Jimmy
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Illsley, Eric
Lamond, James
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McCartney, Ian
McWilliam, John
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Martlew, Eric
Meale, Alan
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Steinberg, Gerry
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Dr. Kim Howells and
Mr. Win Griffiths.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Question put accordingly:

The House divided: Ayes 183, Noes 48.

Division No. 406] **[10.12 pm**

AYES

Alexander, Richard
Alton, David
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Ashby, David
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bermingham, Gerald
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boswell, Tim
Bowis, John
Boyes, Roland
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Coleman, Donald
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Corbett, Robin
Couchman, James
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dixon, Don
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Duffy, A. E. P.
Durant, Tony
Eadie, Alexander
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Flynn, Paul
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Foster, Derek
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, John
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Harris, David
Haynes, Frank
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Irvine, Michael
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*

Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McFall, John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McWilliam, John
Mans, Keith
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meale, Alan
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michael, Alun
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Murphy, Paul
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Patnick, Irvine
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robertson, George
Rost, Peter
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shelton, Sir William
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, J. P. *(Vale of Glam)*
Snape, Peter
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Strang, Gavin
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thorne, Neil
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'caster)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Gwilym Jones and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Clay, Bob
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Hinchliffe, David
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Illsley, Eric
Lamond, James
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McCartney, Ian
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Morley, Elliot
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Redmond, Martin
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Steinberg, Gerry
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Dr. Kim Howells and
Mr. Win Griffiths.

Question agreed to.

Ordered,

That the Promoters of the Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill *[Lords]* shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill, if they think fit, in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all Fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

Ordered,

That if the Bill is brought from the Lords in the next session, the Agents for the Bill shall deposit in the Private Bill Office a declaration signed by them, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill which was brought from the Lords in the present Session;

Ordered,

That as soon as a certificate by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office, that such a declaration has been so deposited, has been laid upon the Table of the House, the Bill shall be deemed to have been read the first and shall be ordered to be read a second time;

Ordered,

That the Petitions against the Bill presented in the present session which stand referred to the Committee on the Bill shall stand referred to the Committee on the Bill in the next Session;

Ordered,

That no Petitioners shall be heard before the Committee on the Bill, unless their Petition has been presented within the time limited within the present Session or deposited pursuant to paragraph (b) of Standing Order 126 relating to Private Business;

Ordered,

That, in relation to the Bill, Standing Order 127 relating to Private Business shall have effect as if the words 'under Standing Order 126 (Reference to committee of petitions against Bill)' were omitted;

Ordered,

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

Ordered,

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.

Medical and Pharmaceutical Services (Scotland)

Mr. Bob Cryer: (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is a note on the Order Paper that

"The Instrument has not yet been considered by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments."

That is no longer accurate. It was considered by the Committee this afternoon. We did not have time further to examine the instrument, but the Committee does not wish to draw the attention of the House to any defect in it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I thank the hon. Gentleman for making that clear.

10.23 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I beg to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that the National Health Service (General Medical and Pharmaceutical Services) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989, No. 1990), dated 31st October 1989, a copy of which was laid before this House on 1st November, be annulled.

I want to draw the attention of the House to a large number of defects in the regulations. I intend to do so briskly because there is just over an hour in which to debate them, and many of my hon. Friends wish to participate in the debate.

We have some fundamental objections to the regulations. I make no apology for having prayed against them and I make no apology either, for inviting my right hon. and hon. Friends to vote against them. Our first and very obvious objection, with which the Minister will be familiar, is that the GPs' contract is being imposed despite the overwhelming opposition of the vast majority of doctors in Scotland. Their dislike of and objections to the contract are shared by the public and are certainly supported by the Opposition.

I want to make it clear that not every proposed change is offensive or unacceptable in itself. For example there are provisions to give individual patients more information about practices and to give them the ability to move from list to list, there is an incentive for doctors to undertake their own night calls and there are a number of other matters with which there is no great quarrel and which will have a fair degree of support. But that is not the essence of the matter.

The imposition of the contract has been necessary because it represents a substantial switch in general paractitioners' incomes to capitation fees. There is no doubt that there has been a marked switch of emphasis. I understand that it is intended that capitation fees should rise from about 45 or 46 per cent. of the income of a practice to about 60 per cent. We fear that the effect will be that fewer doctors will see more patients and that that will build in an incentive to increase patient numbers and cut the time that a doctor spends with each patient. That has been considered over a lengthy period and there has been a spirited public debate. In the parallel debate on the English instruments, my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) drew attention to the findings of the Select Committee on Social Services in 1987 which recorded:

"the proposal to increase the proportion of a general practitioner's income derived from capitation was universally opposed."

Since then, the opposition has become even more marked, more vociferous and more strongly based on public opinion.

As the Minister will no doubt concede, the proposals before us represent the reversal of a change in policy that took place in the 1960s. Until then GPs' remuneration was based almost entirely on capitation fees. That became unpopular and was widely considered as an unsatisfactory system. In 1964, or around that time, under the then Labour Government, there was a major renegotiation which produced a hybrid system. Capitation fees remained important, but there was a substantial switch to fees and allowances. At the same time the Government guaranteed two thirds of the cost of practice workers and a number of other matters.

That essential shift in the balance between capitation and other forms of income, was negotiated on the basis of experience and consensus with the medical profession and with those who were interested in the future of primary medicine under the Health Service. We are now seeing an about-turn. We are being asked to move backwards at the command of the new Right and if we do that it will be to the detriment of the service and the disadvantage of the patient.

No doubt the Minister will argue that there are safeguards in the new Scottish contract, and perhaps he will say a word or two about them. He may point to the operation of the Scottish rural practice fund which is well established and well understood and has been a well-targeted project based largely on a capitation element for smaller practices. Of course there will have to be an increase in the Scottish rural practice fund. I am particularly interested in how that will be paid and whether it will be indexed to keep pace with the cost of living or will take account of the substantial shift towards capitation fees in general practitioners' remuneration. Clearly, if the capitation fee becomes more important and increases as a proportion of the total, small practices are likely to suffer as it grows. If they are to get anything like satisfactory protection, it is essential that we receive assurances from the Minister that the rural practice fund will increase more than simply by the cost of living to take account of that. If our protestations are to carry any credibility, it would be very helpful if the Minister were specific on that point.

The deprivation allowance is a new payment introduced by the contract. It is referred to in paragraph 12 of the contract as an amendment to regulation 31. We know that deprivation is a problem in Scottish society. I draw the House's attention—I do not know whether the Minister is familiar with it—to an article that appeared in the 7 October issue of the *British Medical Journal*. The authors of the article, Vera Carstairs and Russell Morris, set out the stark facts of deprivation in Scotland and the marked connection between those facts and mortality rates. The comparison between the percentage value of components of deprivation in Scotland and those in England and Wales is harsh. Male unemployment is 12·7 per cent. in Scotland but 8·7 per cent. in England and Wales. The figure for housing overcrowding is 25·3 per cent. in Scotland but 5·8 per cent. in England and Wales.

[Mr. Donald Dewar]

Among the social indicators, 41·2 per cent. of the population in Scotland have no car, whereas the figure for England and Wales is 24·4 per cent.

The article says that 24 per cent. of the population of England and Wales live in what are described as affluent conditions—category 1 conditions—whereas the same category embraces only 6 per cent. of the population of Scotland. That is a worrying factor and is perhaps a reproach to us all, but it is directly reflected in the workload of general practitioners and in the Scottish mortality rates. It is depressing to discover that mortality rates in Scotland are 16 or 17 per cent., depending on gender, above those in England and Wales. That is a startling fact.

The Minister may say, "So what?" There may be a tendency to shrug that off, or we may be told that it will be cured by a good dose of the enterprise culture blown away by the healthy enema of Thatcherism, but none of us believes that for a moment.

The impact of deprivation on GPs' work loads is well documented. Research shows that male patients in Scotland aged 65 to 74 have six consultations per annum, whereas in England and Wales it is only five. The figure for females is seven in Scotland and five in England and Wales. Perhaps that difference is marginal, but if it is aggregrated across the caseload of a busy practice or across a community it represents a substantial distinction and underlines the potential importance of the deprivation premium. It futher underlines the importance of how funds will be allocated once they are being paid. That is the second point that I ask the Minister to consider and say a little about.

I understand that over the years the Scottish Office has established acceptable methods of calculating deprivation factors in individual practices. I should like to know what the allocation to Scotland will be for the deprivation allowance. If it is to be paid on a population ratio, we should expect about 9 or 10 per cent., but clearly that would be a mockery given the facts to which I have referred and the overwhelming rate of deprivation in rural and industrial Scotland. I am told that the Jarman index suggests that a fair apportionment of the national total for Scotland would be between 15 and 20 per cent.

A decision must be made, in principle at least, between the Scottish Office and the Department of Health. I hope that the Minister will say that the allocation will be based on the incidence of deprivation and not on a more arithmetical calculation that depends on population ratios. I know that the Minister will be in a position to help us, and I very much hope that he will do so.

I shall confine the rest of my remarks to list sizes because I am aware that I must discipline my comments if other hon. Members are to speak. It would be a tragedy if the considerable advantage which is enjoyed in the Health Service in Scotland were eroded. The average practice list in Scotland is about 1,650 patients. In England, it is marginally under 2,000. There is a significant gap between the two—one gap that I do not want to see closed.

The Under-Secretary seems determined to close that gap. That is the clear implication of his policy. The regulations are offensive because they impose a contract against the wishes of the majority of Scottish doctors and introduce changes which are not in the best interests of patients. They make Scottish GPs more dependent on a simple head count. They build in a financial incentive to increase list sizes. They mean fewer doctors treating more patients.

The Opposition's interest is the future of the Health Service. Efficient general practice is the necessary foundation for the specialist services that often make the headlines. I fear that the regulations are another illustration of the Government's so-called business approach to patient care taking second place to accountancy practice. For that reason, I invite my right hon. and hon. Friends to oppose them.

10.35 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I am astonished at the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), who is normally more assiduous in doing his homework on these matters. He said that he had taken a lot of advice. I shall give him one piece of advice. It is certainly correct to say that GPs in Scotland enjoy smaller list sizes than doctors south of the border. One reason is the fact that, since 1979, under the Government, the number of GPs in Scotland has been increased by 14·9 per cent. The number of women doctors has been increased by about 60 per cent. Under the Conservative Government, average list sizes have fallen from 1,856 to 1,605. If we enjoy the benefits of smaller list sizes, it is because the Government have provided more doctors.

Mr. Dewar: List sizes have always been small.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman says that they have always been small. In 1979, the average list size was 1,856.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill) *rose*——

Mr. Forsyth: In 1988, it was 1,605 because of the increase in the number of doctors that we provided.

Mrs. Fyfe *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The Minister appears not to be giving way.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Member for Garscadden should take account of that fact. He has asked whether this will continue. The answer is yes. We will continue to increase the number of general practitioners. How can the hon. Gentleman argue that average list sizes will have to increase when he knows that the Government are committed to increasing the number of GPs and to increasing expenditure on these primary care services while the population remains broadly static? Elementary mathematics would enable anyone to determine that, in those circumstances, average list sizes cannot increase. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will now withdraw his accusation.

Mr. Dewar: No.

Mr. Forsyth: Will the hon. Gentleman explain how it is possible to increase the number of GPs——

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Forsyth: I am addressing my remarks, through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the Front-Bench spokesman —the hon. Member for Garscadden—who said that

average list sizes will have to increase. If we are going to increase the number of GPs and the population remains broadly static—everyone agrees that it will—how is it possible to argue that average list sizes will increase?

Mr. Dewar: I am fascinated by the Minister's comments. Obviously, we will see what happens over the next year or two. If the hon. Gentleman is saying that no incentive is being built into the scheme to increase list sizes, he is the only person in Scotland who thinks so. He is used to being the only person in Scotland who thinks certain things. We have had to put up with that for a long time. Even the Secretary of State does not usually think the same things as the hon. Gentleman. The truth is that that incentive is being built in. If there is not the increase in list sizes that we predict, we will be in the odd position that the Minister's plans clearly have not worked as he intends.

Mr. Forsyth: On the contrary. The hon. Gentleman has changed his ground. He started off by arguing that the average list size would increase. The *Hansard* account will show that. He is now arguing that there will be an incentive for doctors to attract patients. That is entirely different from arguing that the average list size will increase. The hon. Gentleman cannot argue that the average list size will increase if the number of doctors will increase. The Government have increased the number of GPs in Scotland every year by about 100 and we plan to continue to do so.

The hon. Gentleman said that we shall see what happens in a few years. I take that as a tacit admission that his assertion about the average list is incorrect.

Mr. Robert Hughes: During the summer, I had occasion to visit a GP in Aberdeen as a result of a minor dietary indiscretion. He told me that the principal in the practice had retired, and that if he had known the Minister's plans, he would not have replaced the principal but carried on with fewer doctors. That is how list sizes will rise. Doctors will not be replaced. The Minister's fond claims that the number of GPs will increase will be found to be a gross overstatement.

Mr. Forsyth: I hear what the hon. Gentleman says, but his constituent was making the same mistake as the hon. Member for Garscadden. He is making a judgment, but no hon. Member, me included, and no doctor, knows what the result of the new contract will be for incomes. The contract will be priced not by the Government but by the doctors and dentists review body on the basis of evidence that the Government will give to it.

We have made it perfectly clear that the purpose of the contract is to encourage doctors to extend their range of services, and to ensure that those who provide screening and meet their targets, who encourage their patients to come for check-ups and who provide additional services such as day surgery will be rewarded for doing so. I do not know what kind of service the constituent of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) provides, but many GPs in Scotland provide exactly the type of service that we want to encourage. They are the doctors who turn out in the middle of the night. The hon. Member for Garscadden was kind enough to acknowledge that there are many attractive aspects of the contract. There are doctors who are available at weekends and those who provide day surgery services. They are not sufficiently rewarded for providing such extra services, and the contract will enable them to benefit in a way that has not been possible in the past.

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): How many hours per week does the average Scottish general practitioner work?

Mr. Forsyth: There is no such thing as an average general practitioner, but some figures have been done as a result of the work study. If my hon. Friend will bear with me, I shall come to them later in my speech.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): There are average budgets.

Mr. Forsyth: There are indeed average list sizes and budgets. I said that there is no such thing as an average GP. Each GP provides a range of services that are considered appropriate to his or her patients. The contract will reward most those doctors who do most for their patients, and encourage patients to choose their doctors.

The hon. Member for Garscadden was good enough to say that the retention of the Scottish rural practices fund will make a difference to doctors in Scotland. I think that I am entitled to observe that the contract was negotiated on a United Kingdom basis—Scottish doctors were not prepared to negotiate on a Scottish basis—and my right hon. and learned Friend was able to get the contract amended to reflect Scottish circumstances, including a reduction in list sizes required to qualify for basic practice allowance and changes, which are unique to Scotland, to reflect the position in rural and deprived areas. The pricing of the Scottish rural practice fund is a matter on which we shall be giving evidence to the doctors and dentists review body.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): That has nothing to do with the Minister.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman is right to say that it has nothing to do with me. I should have thought that he would have been reassured rather than alarmed by that. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would be pleased that such a body will price the contract and look at the position. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would also give some credit to Ministers for having secured that. He wrote to me about the matter and has been prepared to discuss it in correspondence.

The hon. Member for Garscadden and I can perhaps agree to acknowledge the importance of the Scottish rural practice fund. I hope that he acknowledges that it will help doctors in rural areas. What will, of course, eventually matter is the weighting that is applied and the sums of money involved—if one is concerned with incomes rather than patient care.

Mr. Dewar: It is pleasant to have the Minister being so pleasant to me, although it is also rather worrying. He has said that he will give evidence so he must know what his Department is pressing for in this matter. Will he confirm that the evidence will be made public? What advice does he think that he will be offering to the pay review body on this matter?

Mr. Forsyth: It is amazing how, in the past, our evidence to review bodies has become public, whether on a voluntary or involuntary basis. On the principle at stake, both my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and I have said repeatedly that the purpose of the

[Mr. Forsyth]

contract is to ensure that doctors who provide the services that we wish to encourage benefit from it and that doctors who work in rural areas, perhaps with smaller list sizes, should not suffer. Our evidence to the review body in respect of doctors in rural areas and doctors in deprived areas will reflect that.

The hon. Member for Garscadden also asked me about the position——

Mr. Robert Hughes: The Minister does not know.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North may say that I do not know, but in fact we shall say that we wish to secure a contract which ensures that doctors who are providing those services benefit as they have not done in the past. The hon. Member for Garscadden has doctors in his constituency who do that and he should be pleased that they will be in that position.

The hon. Member for Garscadden asked me about deprived areas and, rightly, pointed out that there were substantial areas of deprivation in Scotland, and problems of poor housing—many of them exacerbated by municipal Socialism, I might add. He says that there are problems that have an impact on the work load of GPs, and that is true. The capitation will be weighted to take account of that.

The hon. Member for Garscadden also pressed me on how that will be done. It will be done on the basis of Jarman indices and we are currently discussing with the Scottish General Medical Services Council the most appropriate way to achieve that. As with the genesis of the contract, I want very much to proceed on the basis that in Scotland we take the advice and help that are available to us from the SGMSC. We do not always come to the conclusions that it would like, but we are entitled to say that the so-called "tartan contract" went a long way towards meeting its needs.

Mr. Dewar: I appreciate that the Minister is being helpful and has given an interesting response. I do not want to pin him down to specific figures because that would be unfair when negotiations are in train. Would it be fair to say that the Jarman indices suggest a figure of between 15 per cent. and 20 per cent. of the total coming to Scotland?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman begs the question. He has no doubt studied these matters carefully so he will know that the key question is whether one goes for a figure of 20 per cent., 30 per cent. or 40 per cent.—I had better say a number of figures so that people do not latch on to a particular one—of the Jarman indices to define the level of deprivation. That is one point that is being considered at present. The other matters on which we need to be satisfied is that those indices will operate effectively within Scotland, and we are moving towards that.

I would be happy to consider establishing a committee drawn from various interests, as we have done successfully with the rural practice fund, to consider the implementation of this matter. I hope that I have answered as well as I could all the points made by the hon. Member for Garscadden.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) asked me the average number of hours worked by GPs in Scotland. The figure from the 1985-86 work load survey showed that 38 hours per week were worked—*[Interruption.]* Opposition Members seem surprised, but that is the figure and there has been no disagreement about it.

The contract will ensure that services are more responsive to consumers' needs and that we raise standards of care, promote health and prevent illness, give patients the widest range of choice in obtaining high-quality primary care services, enable clearer priorities to be set for the family practitioner services in relation to the rest of the NHS and reward those doctors who do most for their patients by providing the good-quality services that we all want.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Is it not the case that the new idea of paying a certain amount according to the percentage of immunisation and cervical cytology may penalise the doctor working in a difficult area who tries extremely hard to persuade people to come forward for immunisation or cervical cytology? I am thinking particularly of inner-city areas where there is a high mobility within the population and doctors have great difficulty reaching the 50 per cent. mark that has been set, particularly for cervical cytology.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Lady refers to a difficulty that we identified in our discussions in Scotland—which is why we opened up the possibility of the staging of target payments. I opened a health centre in Pollok, Glasgow—the sort of area the hon. Lady is thinking of—which had achieved immunisation targets in excess of 98 per cent. It had done so because it had made that goal a priority. I do not doubt that it is much harder to achieve success in some areas than in others. However, as I have just explained, in those areas where it is harder, because of the weighting on capitation to reflect deprivation, doctors will receive remuneration in addition to that which they would receive as a result of achieving their targets.

The hon. Lady will also know that there have been anxieties about achieving the targets for cervical cytology because of, for example, patients who may have had hysterectomies. But allowance has been made for them.

At the margin we can demonstrate that the Government have taken a flexible view, but it cannot be wrong to set as targets for Scotland—as we have done for immunisation—World Health Organisation targets which have been set for developing countries. It must be right and in the interests of overall health care that those targets are achieved in Scotland.

The remuneration of GPs in Scotland has increased dramatically under this Government. The average total remuneration went up by 37·2 per cent. ahead of inflation to £67,066. The net remuneration—perhaps the best figure to consider—is up by 22·3 per cent. ahead of inflation to £31,105. In Scotland, the number of doctors has risen since 1979 by 15 per cent. and the number of women unrestricted principals by 61 per cent., with average list sizes dropping. Our existing plans for expenditure of £525 million in the current year, rising to £560 million in 1990-91, and £610 million in 1991-92, stand. No doubt a further announcement will be made as part of the 1989 public expenditure survey.

The contract is the logical outcome of our decision to promote better health. I commend the regulations to the House and ask for their endorsement.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. At this reasonably early stage, I should let hon. Members know that there is a lot of interest in this debate. I appeal for short speeches so that I can call most of the hon. Members who wish to take part.

10.54 pm

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): As late as 6 o'clock this evening, I got in touch with the local general practitioner in Springburn, Dr. Henry Bruce, and he told me that he does not know a GP who wants the Minister's contracts. That should be put on the record. Dr. Bruce also told me that, although these contracts are to be implemented in April, not a doctor in Scotland knows what remuneration he will get. The Minister tells us that there will be more doctors. Why is it that, in the Springburn-Possilpark area, health boards have refused to replace three doctors who have retired? That is not consistent with what the Minister is saying.

The Minister keeps talking about practice budgets.

Mr. Allan Stewart: He did not mention them.

Mr. Martin: He may not have mentioned them tonight, but the hon. Gentleman knows that the Minister has often, in correspondence with doctors in my constituency, quoted the cash budget. The Minister knows that only 6 per cent. of the practices in my constituency will benefit from this budget, because only 6 per cent. have 11,000 patients. That is the type of GP service that the Minister wants—big practices with nine doctors. That is not consistent with the personal care he talks about. He wants practices that have been in the city of Glasgow for generation after generation, passed down from father to son and now from father to daughter, to disappear, to be replaced by these big practices.

The hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) spoke of smear tests. For one in every 10 smears taken, a fee is granted, and that fee can cover the other nine tests. Under the new proposals, it is unlikely that doctors will get a payment.

What is the Minister talking about when he speaks of special clinics? We are talking about general practitioners who are prepared to give a comprehensive service, so that, if a patient comes in complaining of a headache and high blood pressure, that will be attended to. The Minister wants the GP to become involved in an exclusive service, with the result that one practice will specialise in high blood pressure, and others in other illnesses. That could cause patients to leave the practice that they have been going to for many years.

The Minister knows that there have been cases in Glasgow, and other urban areas, of drug addicts calling doctors out on bogus calls and ambushing them. Some have been seriously assaulted. This happened to a Doctor Turner in Springburn. With all its faults, at least the deputising service means that in these areas, a deputising doctor can turn up with a driver, who can have the engine running so that, if there are any difficulties, they can get out quick. That is an unfortunate aspect of the society in which we live, but we have to be realistic.

It is insulting that the Minister is prepared to offer a GP three times the amount of money to go to one of his patients that a deputising doctor will get. I do not see the logic in that. I should like to see my doctor fresh from his surgery in the morning, and if I needed a doctor in the middle of the night, I would prefer to get a deputising doctor for that reason. The Minister knows that safety factors must be looked into in the different areas of Glasgow.

I finish by referring briefly to the deprivation allowance, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I am mindful of your earlier remarks. How will the Minister draw boundaries in any city in Scotland? In some of the most deprived areas of Glasgow, there are also the most beautiful streets where well-off people live, and the reverse is also true—there are well-off areas with streets that have serious social problems. How is the Minister going to set about allocating a deprivation allowance in such a situation?

11.1 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I am glad that we are reaching a conclusion tonight in considering these contracts because it is the end of a sad story of misinformation and misunderstanding. I know that in my constituency patients have been left in the fear that they might have a reduced medical service. That is quite incorrect. They believed, too, that general practitioners could not prescribe the required drugs; that general practitioners might send patients to hospitals far from home; and that the number of general practitioners would decrease. However, my hon. Friend the Minister has proved tonight that that is certainly not true.

I am not surprised that, on account of all this misinformation, there was a flood of letters to many hon. Members. Patients were reacting to leaflets published by the British Medical Association and to advertisements in their local papers, which left a great deal to be desired.

General practitioners have an important role to play in the National Health Service. I wish to pay a tribute to family doctors and their staffs for the hard work that they put in, often in inclement weather in the winter. Their work is of a high standard. The new National Health Service reforms and these doctors' contracts will make it an even better service.

There will be more doctors—it is quite wrong for the Opposition to imply that that is not the case, because we know that the number of doctors has increased enormously under the present Government, as has the number of nurses, dentists and other specialists.

It is right that that excellent service should be rewarded. As has been said, pay is fixed by the doctors and dentists review body. My hon. Friend the Minister stated that the average gross remuneration is about £67,000, which is 37 per cent. up in real terms since 1979. We know that there are heavy costs in any practice and that the target income or the net average return is certainly considerably less. I understand that it is about £31,000, with huge variations depending on the capitation fees. In any event, the increase in salary is certainly about 22 per cent. in real terms.

As my hon. Friend stated, in Scotland we also take into account the rural practice fund—and all credit to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland for negotiating that so satisfactorily in the spring. There is also an allowance for general practitioners who work single-handed in isolated areas.

Thus, the contracts have many benefits for general practitioners. In the future, doctors will be paid for minor surgery, for child health surveillance and for health promotion clinics—all very good things. They will have

[Sir Hector Monro]

financial incentives to maximise childhood immunisations and, of course, screening for cancer, to which we all attach great importance.

The system of target payments has already been mentioned. I think that it is perfectly fair that we set a high target of 70 to 90 per cent. for children and 50 to 80 per cent. for women. Those are the World Health Organisation's targets and I believe that in a country that has prided itself for years on its medical care, we should set our targets as high as possible. There will be a post-graduate education allowance, we have discussed the deprivation supplement and there will be more money for the capitation fee.

In view of the criticisms that were expressed in the early spring and summer, it is important to note the benefits for women doctors. I was glad to hear the Minister say that the numbers of women doctors were up by 60 per cent. The new part-time arrangements will enable women doctors to contract to work half time or three-quarters time, and we can look forward to having many more part-time women doctors employed in practices in Scotland.

Mrs. Fyfe: Does the hon. Gentleman believe that women doctors want to work part time on such contracts? Has he not noticed the views of women doctors who are bitterly opposed to the new contract?

Sir Hector Monro: That does not add to the debate —*[Interruption.]* We have 60 per cent. more women doctors and they are being given opportunities to work on a part-time basis. I should have thought that women doctors would appreciate that. As the Minister said, we are also giving higher rates for personal night visits and for the encouragement of students.

There has been a great deal of misinformation about the practice budget. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) pointed out that it was voluntary for practices of 11,000 or more patients. The important point is that it is voluntary, so that nobody need feel that that form of auditing must be undertaken.

The misinformation about prescribing has been extremely annoying. It was suggested that doctors would run out of money and would not be able to prescribe what they felt was clinically essential. They will not run out of money. They will be able to prescribe whatever they consider to be necessary up to £5,000, after which they will seek authority from the area health board, which I am sure will be forthcoming. It was wrong for patients to be given the impression that doctors might run out of money and be unable to prescribe what they required.

Under the new arrangements, there will be many advantages for patients. Doctors will be available at times which suit them and it will be easier to change doctors if necessary, although I hope that that will not often be so. Elderly patients will be entitled to regular checks from 75 years of age, there will be more immunisation and preventive medicine and local facilities will be much better advertised—*[Interruption.]* It is surprising that Opposition Members are not taking this matter seriously. This debate is concerned with the health of the people of Scotland. The Government's proposals will do much to raise the standard of health care in Scotland and will provide more chiropodists, physiotherapists and other specialists.

All in all, this will prove to be a good contract for doctors and patients. Doctors should be better off if they provide a better service. We should encourage them to accept the contract with more enthusiasm than they have shown—*[Interruption.]* I do not know why the hon. Member for Garscadden finds this amusing. The health budget for Scotland this year stands at £2,797 million, far more than ever before, and I am confident that it will be increased when we hear tomorrow about public expenditure. We can expect a better health service than we have enjoyed before, and certainly better than we ever had when Labour Members were in power.

11.9 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): It is deeply unfortunate that we are required to debate the regulations in such a short time. I am not criticising anyone for speaking for too long, but these are extremely important matters. I am sure that there is real frustration on both sides of the Chamber that there is so little time available to us.

I accept that there are benefits under the new contract. Anyone who did not recognise that would be daft. I accept also that there is a need for change. Since 1966, when the previous substantial reform took place, many things have changed. It is proper that the Government should consider afresh the position that now obtains.

I do not attribute any direct link to Scottish Office Ministers, but Ministers have behaved scandalously nationally in introducing imputations and insinuations against general practitioners. They have sought to advance an argument on the basis of doctors' pay, and that is wrong. The GPs to whom I have spoken are more concerned about the provision of patient care than the provision of their income.

Some profoundly damaging consequences could flow from the changes that are being introduced if some of the worst fears that are being bruited by GPs and their representatives in Scotland come to pass. The new regulations could dramatically increase practice income. I listened with care to what the Minister said about more money being spent and more money being provided. I understand the difficulty about average lists, for example, and I agree with him that the decrease in the length of waiting lists and the increase in the number of doctors are welcome. My constituency, which is in the borders, has benefited from both trends since 1966.

However, that is not an argument that the Minister should adduce in favour of the Government and their regulations. After all, Governments of both complexions have moved in those directions. The average list in the borders is 1,450; the Scottish average is 1,650. The percentage of income that is generated by the capitation fee is about 29 per cent., which becomes about 55 per cent. of future income. I do not see how doctors' incomes can do anything other than plummet. The Minister says that that the Government will pay for more doctors, for example, but doctors cannot obtain more patients in the Monynut valley, the Ettrick valley or in other rural practices. No matter how good, persuasive or outward-going a GP might be in an area such as my constituency, and no matter how he responds to the Government's blandishments to improve his performance, he will not get more skulls to

treat. That is an unfortunate phrase. I would prefer to say that the individual GP will be unable to find more patients on which to lavish his loving and tender primary care.

How will the Minister's formula work in a constituency such as mine? How will it work in other rural areas? The hon. Gentleman suggested that the rural practice fund and inducement practice payments will bridge the gap, and it was on that issue that the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) asked a fundamental question. The money put into the rural practice fund must increase, or the fund will diminish, there will be early retirements and women doctors will move on, as they are sometimes obliged to do because they get married and they move with their families. The net result must be a reduction in the number of doctors who are available. I have studied these matters as carefully as most, and I am expressing the views of GPs. The Minister shakes his head, and I trust that when he replies to the debate he will explain where I am wrong.

The importance of the deprivation index should be underlined. A Scottish weighting is essential if we are to make sense of the provision for the central industrial belt. Another issue, perhaps at a more subsidiary level, is the fear that the GPASS software that has been developed in Scotland and is serving extremely well, will not measure up to the new requirements of information technology throughout the United Kingdom. It would be a retrograde step if GPASS were to be thrown out with the bathwater in the rest of the United Kingdom. I hope that the Minister will give us an assurance on that when he replies.

11.14 pm

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): I hope that the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) will forgive me if I do not follow his points because of the shortage of time.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said that a large number of his hon. Friends wanted to speak in the debate, roared on by the hon. Members for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) and for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey)—the only two Opposition Members present at the time.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for responding to my question and providing a number of important statistics. Of course the quantity of services provided by GPs varies; there is no reason why it should not. The trend of Government thinking rightly aims at providing incentives to improved services. That is common ground in the House.

There is much to be commended in the new contract —the increasing availability of doctors, the fact that it will be easier to change doctors, the check-ups for elderly patients, and so on. It must be right that there will be financial incentives to doctors to maximise childhood immunisation and screening for cancer of the cervix. It is also right that GPs working in deprived areas should receive a deprivation supplement, about whose calculation the hon. Member for Garscadden asked a number of questions.

My first question is perhaps a minor one. The age targets are different in England and Wales and in Scotland. The age range quoted in the English contract is 25 to 64, but the age range in Scotland is 20 to 60, and I am not sure why. Can my hon. Friend explain that?

Secondly, doctors in my constituency have expressed their concern about the difficulties of meeting targets for cervical cytology in some areas, not because these areas are deprived but because of large ethnic minorities who might not be prepared, for religious, social and historical reasons, to come forward for such screening.

Thirdly, the success of screening programmes such as those for cervical and breast cancer depend strongly on working from an adequate database. Can my hon. Friend assure the House that the database is good enough?

The Labour party is absurdly hypocritical to criticise the Government's record on women doctors. Certainly, many of them want to work part-time, but there are 60 per cent. more women doctors in Scotland now than there were under the last Labour Government.

11.17 pm

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): We and the people of Scotland revere most doctors as caring and sympathetic people who are motivated not by profit but by job satisfaction. The Secretary of State for Health thinks that they are motivated by profit; or perhaps he thinks that they are as thick as he believes the rest of the Scots are.

As eight out of 10 GPs have rejected the new contract, it must be fundamentally wrong, despite assurances to the contrary from the Minister this evening.

The Minister has already agreed that the issue of cervical cytology is difficult for the Government to explain. My information is that GPs are paid, per item of service, for cervical smears done once every five years on women between the ages of 36 and 60. They receive no payment for most of the smears that are done now. Even with active screening campaigns, few practices in inner cities and in areas such as Kilmarnock, in which there are no ethnic minorities, ever achieve a take-up rate of more than 50 per cent.

The proposed changes rely on target figures being reached, and if less than 50 per cent. of the target figure is reached, no payment will be made, making it completely impractical for many practices to do any smears. That is the great danger that we want to point out on behalf of the GPs who write to us.

Again, that will affect the poorer areas, not the ethnic minority areas, where the uptake rate is always much lower, not because the women form an ethnic minority but because many of them do not have time for a smear because they have so much trouble worrying about how they will meet the next poll tax bill and look after their children with no increase in the family allowance.

The low uptake rate is not just a Scottish phenomenon: it is the same in poorer English areas. For example, a recently published survey by Wendy Savage, consultant gynaecologist at the London hospital, showed that only one in 10 women surveyed in the Tower Hamlets area of London fully understood that the purpose of the smear test was to identify pre-cancerous cell changes for the purpose of eliminating them. Worse still, seven out of 10 women believed that the smear test would detect fully developed cancer and did not present themselves for testing because they believed that it would only confirm their worst fears, not save their lives. That situation is mirrored in the poorer areas of Scotland.

The imposition of such targets will not only not tackle the scandal of more than 2,000 completely preventable

[Mr. William McKelvey]

deaths from cervical cancer every year in the United Kingdom, but is likely to lead to an increase, and that is something that the Minister will have on his conscience. Scotland, with its many poor areas, is likely to bear a disproportionately high percentage of the 2,000 deaths. Since figures are not readily available, I hope that the Minister will collect them to show whether Scotland is affected disproportionately.

The situation will be made worse. A GP is meant to achieve 60 per cent. of a given target in order to receive payment. Does the Minister have any idea how difficult that will be to achieve in an area which could not possibly be described as poor or ill-informed, let alone the areas that have previously been described as poverty-stricken?

In one part of my constituency, Darvel, not a poor area, where local GPs decided on a highly intensive campaign to persuade 173 women to have a cervical smear test, despite a real blitz, only 110 attended for testing. If I am not mistaken, that is the bare minimum of 60 per cent. required before payment is made, and that is in an area of many well-informed—dare I say, middle-class—people.

I hope that that example amply shows that targets will not mean great preventive health care, but less and less, particularly in areas of medicine in which the risk of death should have been eliminated long ago.

There are areas that might benefit from the Minister's plans, but they will be the well-informed, middle-class areas and I am really concerned about the extremely poor people who are least likely to be served by such an ideology.

11.23 pm

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): My hon. Friend the Minister should consider the point made by the hon. Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. McKelvey) on whether the cytology figures can be achieved. That is an important point which requires study.

The Opposition are clearly in a difficulty tonight. First, they have to admit that Scotland has an infinitely better Health Service, and an infinitely better share of medical expenditure per capita, than in England. They cannot tell us that in England there are not deprived areas, and so on.

What is the justification for our having such an enormous benefit that others do not have. Why are the Opposition and the medical profession so ambitiously resistant to any improvement for patients in Scotland and in the Health Service? The variety of services available, whether in rural practice, hospitals or urban practice is vast. What we want to see is encouragement so that the patient is given a better service everywhere. I find it profoundly depressing that the medical profession has consistently set its face against the possibility of improvement. I fear that there may be times when its members feel that the good of the patients is not as important as that of the doctors.

As we move towards spending money more effectively and improving medical services, I find it extraordinary that the Opposition should object to our proposals to try to restrict the amount spent on drugs. When did they suddenly become the promoters of the international drug companies that are ripping off patients—for that, effectively, is what they are doing? When did the Opposition suddenly decide that they wanted such companies to make bigger profits at the expense of patients? I should have expected them to say, "Hurrah for the contract: thank goodness, the patients will benefit and the international drug companies will not."

That is just one of the hypocrisies of the Opposition. The Minister has proposed a contract that would give vast benefits to patients. We in Scotland should be far more concerned about them than about those who ought to be proud to serve them—those who have taken the Hippocratic oath, and should abide by it.

11.26 pm

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Sir N. Fairbairn) should, I think, have the modesty to read some of the articles that define the problems of the Scottish health service. I recommend the article in volume 299 of the *British Medical Journal* of 7 October this year, which was mentioned by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). It was written by Vera Carstairs and Russell Morris, and based on research funded by the chief scientist of the Scottish Home and Health Department.

If that does not convince the hon. and learned Gentleman of the need for improvement in the Health Service in Scotland, perhaps he would like to read the report by the alternative Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, and to note the references made in it to Glenn and Hulbert. He can have it for the reduced rate of £1 per copy; I think that he will find it useful bedtime reading.

Many GPs and others interested in the Health Service will find it difficult to believe the Minister's assertion that GPs work only 38 hours per week. I find it amazing that he can say such a thing as though there were no possibility of contradiction: indeed, he himself was contradicting all the evidence from GPs. I understand that they work an average of 73 hours per week, of which 30 are spent providing general medical services; in addition, they are on call and have other health-related responsibilities.

Let me deal next with the vexed question of list sizes, and the role of women GPs—as a female Member of Parliament from Scotland, I should like to say something about how the legislation is likely to affect them. The new predictions for list sizes show a move away from allowances. Practices have always been attracted by the idea of employing a woman GP as a partner on a 20-hour-per-week basis, because she will put various allowances into the kitty. Generally, though not always, those women have been involved in obstetric, gynaecological and antenatal practice, and have played a fundamental role. As a result of the contract, they seem to be faced with alternatives: increasing their hours of work to 26 per week or taking on a new contract. Both will have deleterious effects on their family life. Women GPs often work only 20 hours a week because of their family commitments, but they bring that particular facility to the practice.

The Minister was right to refer to the large increase in the number of women GPs working in Scotland and elsewhere in the United Kingdom. We welcome that increase, but I must point out to him and to the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) that the new contract could reverse a trend that is attracting women GPs into general practice. The Government argue strongly in favour of people being given a choice, but they could restrict their choice because many patients wish to have a woman doctor.

It being half-past Eleven o'clock, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 15 (Prayers against statutory instruments, &c. (negative procedure)).*

The House divided: Ayes 174, Noes 212.

Division No. 409] **[11.30 pm**

AYES

Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Boateng, Paul
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gould, Bryan
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howells, Dr. Kim (Pontypridd)
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Martyn *(Clwyd S W)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Martlew, Eric
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morley, Elliot
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Watson, Mike *(Glasgow, C)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allan McKay and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Boswell, Tim
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Sir Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fishburn, John Dudley
Fookes, Dame Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Hague, William
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Harris, David
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Irvine, Michael
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, Sir Michael
McNair-Wilson, Sir Patrick
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*

Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, Sir David
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Sir Charles
Morrison, Rt Hon P *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Norris, Steve
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Rt Hon Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Renton, Rt Hon Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, Sir William
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon Sir John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, Sir John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Dr. Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Greg Knight and
Mr. Irvine Patnick.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. On 26 October, I received a reply from the Under-Secretary of State for Wales saying that he would place in the Library copies of undertakings for the purpose of section 20(5)(b) of the Water Act 1989 and relaxations granted under regulations 4(1)(c) and 4(2) of the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 1989. Yesterday I was promised that that information would be in the Library today. It still is not there. I seek your advice, Madam Deputy Speaker, on how I can obtain it.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The matter has nothing to do with the business that we are about to consider. Indeed, it has nothing to do with the Chair. I hope that it has been noted by the Department concerned.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Further to the point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Today, I heard my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) say that the Government were using the opportunity of Prorogation day to release certain information, without us knowing. The Government said that they had not got the information to the printers on time. Another planted question was raised. It all shows that the Government are now a total shambles——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a matter for the Chair. We must proceed with the business of the House.

Bovine Somatotropin

11.46 pm

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. David Curry): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8975/89 relating to bovine somatotropin; and supports the Government's policy that the basis for authorising such products must be a thorough, scientific appraisal to confirm their safety.

I shall begin by outlining the Community proposal which we are discussing tonight. It deals with the synthetic hormone, bovine somatotropin—which I will abbreviate to BST, to avoid future risk—which can increase the milk yield of dairy cows. It would allow trials to continue at national level and objective scientific evaluation of the data obtained, both by independent experts in member states and by a parallel expert committee of the European Community.

The Commission maintains that the proposal does not bring into question the current system of evaluation. First, it would require member states not to authorise the commercial use of BST before 1991. Secondly, it would require the Commission to report in more detail to the Council, with proposals if necessary, by 1 October next year. Frankly, we do not know what proposals the Commission has in mind, and we suspect that it does not either.

The present proposal has been put forward by the Commission under article 43 of the treaty. It has been referred to the Economic and Social Council and to the European Parliament for opinion. The ECOSOC's report is awaited. The Parliament will not take this proposal before December, if then, and the Council will thereupon act upon a qualified majority but may be able to give a formal endorsement following discussions at the level of COREPER.

Bovine somatotropin is a single chain polypeptide—amino acids which are building blocks for protein—produced by the pituitary gland in all cows. It is both a protein and a hormone. In lactating cows the normal action of BST is to divert more of the animal's food intake to milk production.

The same effect occurs with the administration of synthetic BST, which can now be manufactured by the same genetic engineering processes which have made it possible to produce commercial quantities of insulin, of AIDS-free blood factor 8, and of interferon, which is a valuable drug against certain forms of cancer.

Because it is a protein, BST is broken down by digestive mechanisms, and it must be administered by injection. Both chemically and biologically, BST is very different from the growth-promoting hormones banned under European Community and United Kingdom legislation. It has no hormonal action in man. All studies have failed to demonstrate such action in man. Some work was conducted in the 1950s and 1960s to discover whether BST would be effective in overcoming dwarfism in humans. It failed.

As for the framework for approval in the United Kingdom, synthetic BST falls within the legal definition of a medicinal product. It is therefore subject to the controls set down in the Medicines Act 1968. The Act exists to protect public and animal health by ensuring that no product may be marketed in the United Kingdom until all data relating to its safety, quality and efficacy—the trinity upon which the scientific advice depends—have been thoroughly scrutinised by qualified scientists and found to be satisfactory. Only when all the data have been evaluated, and the company has provided full and satisfactory answers to any questions which arise during the scrutiny, can a licence be issued.

Although quality and human safety data can be worked up in a laboratory, it is often not possible for companies to provide data on efficacy and animal safety without conducting field trials, which must be authorised under the Medicines Act 1968. This authority, known as an animal test certificate, is issued only when the quality and human safety data permit scientists to draw the firm conclusion that trials may be conducted safely. This conclusion may be drawn for BST, and field trials are currently being undertaken in the United Kingdom and a number of other countries in Europe, including France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, and in the United States.

In the United Kingdom, BST products are currently undergoing trials and assessment. The trials have been running for about four years. A maximum of just over 1,000 cows on up to 10 sites have been involved, although far fewer are normally involved at any one time. For example, on 8 November, 56 cows on four sites were being treated with manufactured BST. The milk from the trials is sold in the normal way through the Milk Marketing Board, which pools it with other milk. On 8 November, which was a typical day, it accounted for less than a hundredth of 1 per cent. of total milk supply.

While the scientific standards to be applied are increasingly governed by Community rules—assessment falls under directive 81/851, for example—responsibility for licensing decisions rests with the national licensing authority, in this case Agriculture Ministers.

Why has the Commission made this proposal? Its answer, to judge by its accompanying report to the Council and Parliament, is that time is needed to look at the other aspects of BST use which are not currently being considered as part of the licensing process. The Commission wants to look at the social and economic implications of widespread BST use, should a product licence be issued. It wants to examine the impact on the structure of the dairy industry and the wider implications for the rural economy. It also wants to look at the market impact, if there were to be a reaction by consumers against the use of synthetic BST in cows producing the milk they drink.

These are important questions, even if they are separate from the safety, quality and efficacy criteria in the licensing process. Some argue that they should form the basis of a so-called fourth criterion in that process. That implies a similar, scientific assessment against agreed objective standards. As far as I know, however, no such further test has successfully been formulated.

The social and economic concerns relate essentially to the impact of BST on the structure of the dairy industry and farming generally. The consequences of licensing BST could be widespread, as the Commission has noted in forwarding this proposal. Increases in milk yields and declines in dairy cow and calf numbers could trigger adjustments across the industry. Much depends on the assumptions made—for example, about how cost-effective BST would be and the extent of its uptake by milk producers.

[Mr. David Curry]

Depending on those assumptions, it could be further argued that there would be a differential effect on larger and smaller dairy farmers. Hon. Members will know that small farmers are one of the current preoccupations of Brussels. If BST were nevertheless assumed to be attractive to those who produce and market milk, it might also be maintained that its availability in some parts of the Community and not others would confer unfair advantages on farmers in areas where it is available.

To put all this in perspective, however, we should note how matters have already developed in the dairy industry, without any help from BST. In the United Kingdom, milk yield per cow increased by 27 per cent. from 1970 to 1988, and by 2 per cent. after 1984, when quotas were introduced.

There are understandable concerns which go back long before the issue of BST. We have to recognise that there are very few firm facts on which to base calculations and projections. They quickly give way to an essentially subjective forecasting exercise. In the process, it is not easy to isolate the impact of any one factor, such as BST, from all the others, such as breeding developments and improved feeding techniques, which contribute far more to developments in the dairy sector.

The Government take the view that objective scientific evaluation is the only reliable basis for taking action in the veterinary medicines sector. Some questions which fall outside the objective licensing process are legitimate, but answers to them should be found in the political arena and within the scope of policies relating to agricultural production and marketing.

The second group of concerns are those expressed by consumers, and they clearly deserve the closest possible consideration. The licensing process, which I have outlined, already addresses many of those concerns, but there is a broader issue here to be faced by those developing and using high technology in consumer-sensitive areas, such as food production. It is for them to accept responsibility for informing and advising their intended customers. In establishing consumer safety, the Government are directly and intimately involved. The standards applied within our licensing system are rigorous in the extreme, as I shall show.

When applications for authority to conduct trials into BST were considered, the Veterinary Products Committee looked carefully at the data concerning consumer safety and at the possibility that synthetic BST might affect the milk we drink. Milk is not a standard product. It contains many different substances and natural hormones, including BST, most of them in minute, but variable, quantities. The evidence examined by the Veterinary Products Committee showed that use of manufactured BST could lead in some circumstances to an increase in the amount of those substances that was present in milk, although the increases were very small and the amount of the substances remained within the normal range of variability. The substances concerned are milk fat, biotin, which is an essential vitamin, IGF1, which is a natural hormone involved in milk production, and BST itself.

The Committee considered that field trials involving the small number of animals I have already mentioned would pose no risk to consumers. Milk from the trials was compositionally and nutritionally within the normal range of variability. However, because some members of the committee have retired and others have been appointed since that conclusion was reached, I recently asked the committee to review the evidence afresh. It came unanimously to the same conclusion, and had it not been satisfied on that point, the field trials would not have been authorised and allowed to continue.

Now that the Committee is looking at applications to issue product licences for two BST products, it is considering the implications should BST become widespread. Milk from treated cows might then, potentially, provide half or more of the total supply. In line with that cautious approach, the VPC has sought advice from the Department of Health on the nutritional and health implications of such a development, and its advice is expected soon. With or without the present Commission proposal, there will be no licensing of BST until all objective concerns about consumer safety have been resolved. We are being just as exhaustive in evaluating any possible animal welfare problems.

Companies must know that, if a product is not safe, they will not be allowed to market it. Conversely, they should know that if a product is safe, they will be allowed to market it and to see whether it meets acceptance in the marketplace. Without such an assurance, the industry will cease to invest in the development of new products and it will certainly hesitate before making investments in the European Community. The Government believe firmly in the principle of taking licensing decisions on scientific evidence related to safety, quality and efficacy.

The incentive or disincentive effects of decisions in these matters are not easily confined to a single area of research. We have to bear in mind the potential effects, especially in other parts of the human and veterinary medicines industry, which is both a provider of new medicines and a significant employer. The wider effects also extend to international trade. Unilateral action taken on disputed scientific grounds or mere political expediency can, as experience with the beef hormone problem has shown, jeopardise progress towards better trading relations in the agricultural sector.

The scientific discipline of the licensing system is adapted to meet the objective concerns that are expressed about products such as BST. I have acknowledged that there are wider issues and concerns that are not—and cannot be—resolved in that way, but which deserve study. The Commission plans to follow this up and we shall take a close interest in its findings. The decisions to be taken, however, must be based firmly on the facts. I therefore commend the motion to the House.

11.59 pm

Mr. Ron Davies (Caerphilly): On 28 November last year I tabled an early day motion calling on the Government to impose a ban on the non-therapeutic use of BST. It was supported by 117 members, mainly but not exclusively, Labour Members. On 29 November the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) tabled a similar motion calling for a ban on the use of BST in the United Kingdom which was supported by 66 Members, mainly, but not exclusively, Conservatives. That cross-party expression of opinion in the House reflects widespread public concern about and opposition to the use of BST in Britain's dairy herds.

In contributing to this latest chapter of the debate on BST I shall mention one incident in the debate's history which helps to put the Government's position in perspective. The incident was reported in the *Farmers' Weekly* on 15 July 1988 under the banner headline, "Gummer in Big BST Row". It took place when the right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal (Mr. Gummer) was the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

This evening the Minister had made great play of the fact that he and his Department will be guided, if not bound, by scientific evidence. Before the scientific evidence on which the case for BST has been based had even been collected, the right hon. Member for Suffolk, Coastal went on television to say:

"There is no scientific evidence whatsoever of any kind saying that BST is in any sense dangerous."

Mr. Elliot Morley (Glanford and Scunthorpe): The right hon. Gentleman is a member of the Synod.

Mr. Davies: As my hon. Friend has said, the right hon. Gentleman may be a member of the Synod of the Church of England, but in this outburst he was implicitly laying claim to the prophetic powers of Isaiah. The right hon. Gentleman's big BST row was a classic example of speaking out of turn. His comments were described as intolerable by an outraged member of the Veterinary Products Committee, the very organisation charged with deciding the issues upon which the Minister had so definitively commented. Were the VPC a court of law—it has a quasi-judicial role in product licensing—the right hon. Member would have been in contempt of court by now for speaking on a matter that was sub judice and might, even now, have delighted us all by thinking holy thoughts in gaol.

However, both the right hon. Member and BST are still before us and the VPC is still conducting its deliberations. The same scientist who was outraged by the Minister's comments last year repeated in an article in *The Guardian* on 6 October this year:

"BST . . . is a potential health risk to humans and its use should not be allowed."

The same scientist who was appointed by the Government and was a distinguished member of the VPC, continued:

"Assurances from Ministers that BST . . . is safe to drink in milk cannot be justified. The trials prove nothing about its potential dangers to human health and are now ethically questionable.

The risk people face in drinking small amounts of BST-milk over a short period of time (during the experiments) is no measure of the risk faced by the whole population drinking nothing but BST-milk once it were approved".

We are still awaiting the final adjudication from the VPC on whether BST meets the trilogy to which the Minister referred and is safe, efficacious and pure. We do know, however, despite the restrictions of the Official Secrets Act, that the committee has already, on several occasions, refused to grant the product licence.

Mr. Curry: I wish to make it clear that members of that committee do not sign the Official Secrets Act but are bound by certain rules of confidentiality which stem from the Medicines Act 1968. The scientist to whom the hon. Gentleman constantly referred voted for the continuation of these trials. It was a unanimous decision.

Mr. Davies: I am glad that the Minister is so well briefed he knows the name of the scientist to whom I refer. Perhaps he will give us a guarantee that the scientist, whose term of office expires this December, will not be sacked for breaking the conditions imposed on him under the Medicines Act. Will the Minister guarantee that scientists who have made public statements on the safety of BST will not be sacked?

Mr. Curry: No scientist is sacked if he acts within the law. The only rules of confidentiality that are imposed are those that relate to the Medicines Act. There is no question of the Official Secrets Act being used. Where we consider membership, we shall do so on the merits and not on any extraneous factor.

Mr. Davies: The Minister has started to dig himself a deep hole. In the early part of his speech, he was making it clear that the European Community would have to consider other factors. I am satisfied that when the EC comes to make a decision on BST, it will refuse it—for reasons of convienience and in the light of all the analysis of the welfare arguments and the socio-economic arguments to which the Minister alluded—regardless of whether BST meets the trilogy of conditions—safety, efficacy and quality. The Minister will then have to explain to the various chemical companies how he is taking decisions almost on an ad hoc basis when the products have been submitted to the licensing system and approved. That is the problem that the Minister has created for himself, and which he has to resolve if he is to maintain credibility.

We already know that distinguished members of the VPC have expressed their grave concerns about the safety and efficacy of the product. We also have the benefit of knowing the opinion of the Council of Ministers. When it discussed the issue at length in June of this year, the Minister's predecessor was in the lonely position which has become so familiar to British Conservatives when meeting our European partners. He was alone in speaking against the proposal to refuse a licence to BST. All the other 11 Ministers agreed that the British Government's view was the wrong one.

The opposition to the use of BST shown by the Council of Ministers is shared by consumers and farmers. The National Farmers Union has made crystal clear its view on this issue. At its annual meeting in February, the depth of grassroots feeling against BST forced the union to abandon its policy of fence sitting and take a strong line against BST. The majority view among farmers has become the official view of the NFU. That view is shared by the Farmers Union of Wales, the Scottish union, and the Women's Farming Union. Representing the consumer-producer nexus, the Milk Marketing Board opposed the use of BST. Several large retail outlets, including Tesco, Marks and Spencer and the Co-op have all stated that they will not stock BST-produced milk.

One solution to the vexed question of consumer attitudes to BST has been advanced by the president of the Dairy Trade Federation, Mr. Andrew Dare. Speaking shortly after his appointment in June of this year, he proposed:

"Producers who decide to use this technology must be prepared to segregate their milk and label it accordingly. The consumer will then have the choice of whether to buy it or not."

Mr. Dare is managing director of St. Ivel. He will know as well as any one in the dairy industry that his suggestion is impracticable and would preclude the commercial use of BST. I dare say that that is his intention.

[Mr. Davies]

Both producers and retailers know that much of the esteem in which milk and other dairy products are held comes from their justified reputation for being fresh, pure, natural and unadulterated. They realise the enormous damage that would be done to that reputation, and their livelihoods, if BST were authorised. With authorisation, but without labelling, all milk would be under the cloud of "BST-produced".

Last week, in one of his many TV interviews on the subject of lead contamination in milk, the Minister said:

"I am committed to safety first, and therefore I have taken these very important measures even before we have any evidence, and if I turn out to have over-reacted that seems to me the way the public would like it".

It is a pity that the Minister does not apply that principle more consistently. Producers, manufacturers, retailers, consumers, scientists and welfarists are all agreed that too much is at stake. We are not asking the Minister to overreact but to demonstrate his commitment to safety first.

In countering the preponderant view against its product, the pro-BST lobby has put out highly tendentious propaganda on consumer opinion surveys undertaken on its behalf by reputable market research organisations. One good example was the claim by one of the companies involved in secret trials of BST that because a large majority of the sample had not heard of the hormone, that suggested a lack of consumer concern. What is did not reveal was the attitude of those people who had heard of BST. To claim that because a group of people are ignorant of an issue means that they would be unconcerned if they had heard of it is patently dishonest. I suggest that it does more harm than good to the case for BST.

Mendacious though that claim may be, it is small beer compared with a claim by one representative of the same company. The European marketing manager of Monsanto, Mr. Robert Deakin, speaking at a conference on genetic engineering, referred to those of us who object to the use of BST as "gastronomic terrorists". To my knowledge, that adds a new term to the salesman's lexicon. However, to judge by BST's progress, it has not been notably successful as a popularising catchphrase.

We have seen that, over-hyped Ministers and drug companies apart, the consensus on BST is against its use. I am against the motion not only because I share that majority view but because I am also of the opinion that there must be some consideration of the likely impact of new, sometimes ethically questionable, developments in veterinary science before we give them the green light.

It might help the Minister to know that Lord Plumb, former president of both the NFU and the European Parliament, said in a recent speech to the British Veterinary Association that the debate has moved on from whether there should be a fourth criterion, to the position where it would be "part and parcel" of future licensing. Therefore, he said, referring to the veterinary profession:

"The profession must now work to ensure that the so-called 'fourth hurdle' is as close to scientific evidence as possible".

That is the question to which the Minister should address himself tonight.

The present procedure results in the future of drugs such as BST being determined on political grounds, not on the scientific grounds that the Minister argued. If the Minister doubts that, he is at odds with his predecessor who was able to agree with his EC counterparts at the June Council meeting that

"the decision on the future use of BST was a political issue".

That was reported in the Agra Europe report on 23 June.

Like it or not, that is the position. It seems that the former Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food did like it, for in spite of his later protestations to the contrary, on a visit to a Scottish research foundation in March of this year, he said:

"If an application for a BST licence lands on my desk it will have to go through the most rigorous assessment, including evidence of need, by both the appropriate scientific committee and the European Community".

That is a far cry from the case that the Minister made tonight, when he said that BST must merely meet the three scientific criteria. His predecessor acknowledged that there had to be an assessment of need before he would grant a product licence. Perhaps the Minister can tell us what has changed—apart from the incumbent in office—between the decision of his predecessor in March, demanding, requiring and insisting, using his authority as Minister, that there would be an assessment of need, and the present Parliamentary Secretary's explanation of the Government's view that there must be merely the meeting of those three scientific criteria.

If the Minister is now taking a different view, that is between him and this right hon. Friend; but the reality is that this decision is going to be a political one. We must ensure that all concerned know the basis on which it is taken so as to remove as much as possible the uncertainty facing those who develop new veterinary products.

The Government claim that these issues should be decided only on the basis of assessment by scientific criteria because, among other things, that allows the pharmaceutical companies to know where they stand. This position is fundamentally contradicted by paragraph 11 of the MAFF explanatory memorandum on the EC legislation that is before us, which states:

"In the United Kingdom's view the decision whether to authorise BST or not should be taken on the established criteria. The other non-scientific issues including economic implications should be addressed outside the licensing system".

Is it now the Minister's position that there must be an assessment on the basis of scientific criteria, that a decision will then be taken to license the product but that there will be a further evaluation—presumably as part of a political debate—to determine whether that product can be sold, even though it has been granted a product licence? We must draw that conclusion from the Minister's remarks and from his Department's explanation of the EC document.

What on earth does it mean? It appears to mean that licensing should take place under existing procedures, but that another evaluative mechanism should be established whereby it is decided on political grounds whether, if a product has been granted a licence, the manufacturers should be permitted to sell it.

Companies that have been involved in producing BST, and those investing in other artificial growth promoters and hormones, will not take kindly to that prescription, for it is a recipe for the political uncertainty which the Minister claims he wishes to avoid. Indeed, what could inject more uncertainty into the minds of the corporate strategists and research scientists?

If the Government concede that matters other than the purely scientific are to be considered—that is the implication of paragraph 11—surely it is best to incorporate those into the licensing procedures, rather than make the manufacturers jump through two hoops instead of the existing one?

But do the Government concede that non-scientific criteria should be considered? The Minister's predecessor's comments showed that, when he was at MAFF, they did. However, paragraph 10 of the explanatory memorandum says:

"The current procedure offers to companies the assurance that the considerable investment they make to develop new products will not be wasted as a result of Government action except on firm scientific grounds."

If we take paragraph 11 at face value—the one that says that non-scientific issues should be addressed, but outside the licensing system—nothing could be further from the truth.

Are we to believe paragraph 10 or paragraph 11? Because the Government should come clean and minimise the uncertainty facing pharmaceutical innovation, we think that the socio-economic and environmental criteria should be incorporated into the licensing system. We support the fourth criterion, because we appreciate that it is already a factor in the European deliberations and because we want the procedure to be above board and transparent.

We support the fourth criterion because it is necessary to evaluate the wider effects of new products. In the words of the MAFF explanatory memorandum:

"The authorisation of BST and other comparable products for use in livestock could have a significant effect on productivity with potentially far-reaching implications for production techniques and socio-economic structures in agriculture."

The Minister, in his memorandum, recognises that, yet he refuses to accept the logic of the explanation which his Department has offered.

Given that premise—and I entirely agree with it—it would be irresponsible and negligent in view of the responsibilities that MAFF has to those already in dairying if the socio-economic and environmental impacts of permitting the use of biotechnology were not assessed. Since those effects have to be considered, it would be better that they were examined under a fourth criterion as part of the licensing system, rather than in an ad hoc manner after a licence has been granted.

What could be more undermining of the confidence of the pharmaceutical research establishment than the Government choosing this sort of ad hockery rather than a clearly enunciated and comprehensible fourth criterion? To quote the director of the Commission division responsible for free trade after 1992:

"It should be possible for firms to know in advance what regulatory framework a new product will be subjected to. The Community should play the game according to a strict and fixed set of rules; it's a little hard on the manufacturer if the goal posts are moved while the game is in progress".

The European Parliament has called for an examination of BST on the grounds of safety, quality and efficacy. It called on the Commission to examine the consequences of the use of BST and consider inter alia the necessity for additional criteria such as social and economic factors. That is the view which the Opposition support and, therefore, we do not endorse the Government's view on the document.

12.20 am

Mr. John Greenway (Ryedale): I do not wish to detain the House at this late hour. My hon. Friend the Minister and the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) have espoused most of the arguments, but two issues need to be addressed: first, the principle of scientific advice and the priority that that should play in the licensing system; and, secondly, the public reaction to the use of certain medicinal and therapeutic products. The Government are right to pursue the principle that the first priority must be to make scientific advice paramount. Subjective factors should not cloud scientific facts when it comes to licensing.

There is a problem with the fourth criterion, and I listened with great interest to what the hon. Member for Caerphilly said about that. I understand that many farming elements are unhappy about parts of the criterion, and that is something that we shall need to discuss long after this debate. There are dangers, however, in using socio-economic factors when assessing the efficacy of medicinal and therapeutic products. There are dangers especially when we are dealing with the emotive issue of hormones.

There is a public aversion to some scientific applications in the food chain, especially those involving hormones. Milk production is especially sensitive. The hon. Member for Caerphilly was right to draw attention to the benefits that accrue either to the farmer or the consumer, but that is not the primary issue. We have scientific advice, which has been updated in recent weeks, that the results of the trials and tests are safe. I am concerned about the public aversion and its impact on the consumption of milk and dairy products. As the Government have said, as long as a product is safe, it should be for the producer to decide. Such is the nature of the marketing of milk and dairy products, however, that while one producer may decide against the use of BST, another may opt in favour of it. It is difficult, nay impossible, for the customer to know whether any of the milk that he or she consumes could have been involved with BST.

That may leave the customer with one option, and that is not to buy milk or dairy products. That could be disastrous for some farmers. It is a great pity that the BST issue has forced the Government to highlight their efforts —sensible, in my view—to resist EC moves to over-use socio-economic factors to overrule scientific advice on the licensing system for medicinal products. I hope that the trials that are taking place will end soon. Perhaps my hon. Friend will be able to tell the House of the time scale that is envisaged for the continuation of the trials. When they are completed I hope that most farmers will decide against the use of BST. If the priority of agriculture is to restore and retain the confidence of the consumer in the purity of the product, it must be responsive to the genuine concerns of the public, ill informed or misinformed though they sometimes are. The industry must avoid the unnecessary use of medicines and therapeutic applications that create uncertainty or alarm.

It is inevitable that consumer watchdogs will delve into and exploit in whatever way they can the use of BST and hormones in the preparation of milk and dairy products, should some farmers decide to use them. The hon. Member for Caerphilly clearly said that the National Farmers Union has come out strongly against the use of BST, and if most farmers decide against its use, that will

[Mr. John Greenway]

vindicate the Government's position. There is a case for saying that we must support the principle that scientific advice and evidence should be given first, but that farmers must decide whether to use a product in their farming practices. If scientific advice says that something is safe, it is up to them to decide whether to use it.

The vast majority of farmers will want nothing to do with BST. If consumers and retailers want clear evidence that BST has not been used in the preparation of the milk products bought in their shops, the milk marketing board and other organisations involved in the supply of milk will have to come to terms about that with their producers.

I support what my hon. Friend said, with the caveat that we want the trials to end soon. The use of BST could fundamentally undermine the recovery of our milk and dairy industries.

12.27 am

Mr. Martyn Jones (Clwyd, South-West): I support the call of my hon. Friend the Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) for a fourth criterion as part of the licensing system for products such as BST. That criterion must be the ethical and environmental effect of such products.

I shall go further and suggest that the provisions of the Medicines Act 1968 under which BST was tested are entirely inappropriate for a completely commercial product such as this, and ethical and social factors should be considered before animal test certificates are granted for a product which by no stretch of the imagination could be called a medicine. Such considerations should stand apart from those of safety, quality and efficacy. But in this case there are serious question marks over safety, too. For instance, we are told that the genetically engineered hormone is identical to naturally occurring BST, but to which one? At least four occur within the cow.

What about the spare amino acids in the genetically engineered version? Some versions contain up to eight different amino acids along the chain of the genetically engineered version.

Potentially the most worrying factor is this: what possible control does a producer have over the genetic variability of a fermenter containing billions of E. coli organisms—except the crude measurement of the efficiency of the hormone produced? It is entirely possible that spontaneous mutations may occur in the E. coli organisms used in a fementer, which may lead to the production of a version of BST which, though still biologically active, may be very different in structure and long-term effect. That question cannot be satisfactorily answered with the present state of technology.

The other concern that must be considered is the animal's welfare. To say the least, it is somewhat hypocritical of the Minister to acquiesce with the EC in the pre-slaughter injection of papain, a practice which he claims is not inhumane, and yet not act on BST injections in cattle.

We have created by artificial selection cattle which have naturally high levels of BST by breeding for milk production, and now we are considering subjecting them to a massive increase in the levels of that hormone. That must mean an unnatural strain on the animal's physiology. Something must give, and I suspect that in the long term it will be the animal's health.

The documents that we are considering, by establishing a further evaluation period, and the Select Committee's report, tacitly recognise the yawning gap in the procedure for evaluating novel products created by genetic recombinant techniques, and the use of such products for purely commercial aims.

When all the factors are properly taken into account, the use of BST will be prohibited and any future products should have their ethical and social effects considered before even trials are permitted.

12.30 am

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North West): I shall not follow the hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) in his doubts about the use of the procedure laid down in the Medicines Act 1968 in evaluating BST. It is generally accepted that the Government have acted with complete responsibility in applying the stringent criteria of that Act to the product. I doubt whether any European nation would be able to show a better record than the Government in the full and proper evaluation of BST.

My concern is not whether the product will be fully evaluated—I share the Minister's doubts about whether a fourth criterion is necessary in determining whether the product should be used—my doubt is in a rather more specific area. My hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) said that consumers had been ill-informed or misinformed on the nature of the product. Neither description is entirely accurate. The problem is that consumers have not been informed at all.

I represent a constituency of milk consumers. To the best of my knowledge, I do not represent one milk producer. But when a rumour developed in my constituency that one of 10 sites in which BST was being tested was close to Bristol and that the milk was being sold in Bristol, it was impossible to obtain a confirmation or denial.

If a product is being tested under the stringent provisions of the Medicines Act, we owe it to the consumers of that product to tell them that either there is no possibility of the product entering the milk they buy, or there is such a possibility.

I accept my hon. Friend the Minister's assurance that the possibility is slight, but however slight it is, we add nothing to the product's credibility by being seen to hide whether that possibility exists.

Despite the EC document and the Minister's comment that testing in Britain has probably been more stringent than elsewhere, he has nevertheless done considerable damage to his case by acting in what might be called a paternalistic way and refusing to inform consumers whether they might have been subject to the test.

12.34 am

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): I do not know how many hon. Members have milked cows frequently, but I have milked hundreds. At the hour of the morning when we often finish our debates, many people are starting to milk their herds.

We cannot ignore the background of Britain's dairy industry. The average yield of the 3 million dairy cows that we are considering is 5,500 litres per cow, and we are told that the application of BST will increase that yield by anything from 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. A potential increase to over 6,000 litres per cow will leave farmers with

some difficult choices, given milk quotas: they must either go for increased yield and BST, or cut the number of cows that they possess. The implications of that are considerable, especially for small farmers. The implications of milk going over quota, and of increased milk production EEC-wide, are particularly serious, in view of the agony of the milk producers who have gone out of production over the past four or five years, and the 20 per cent. drop in United Kingdom milk production.

The core of the argument, it seems to me, is whether BST will be granted a product licence under the three criteria advanced by the Minister tonight. Will he, indeed, take on board the fourth criterion of economic and socio-economic factors? These are difficult problems for him to wrestle with. In his opening speech, he appeared to discount that fourth criterion, but I think that he was unwise to do so.

The Government's narrow view contrasts with the wider view of the European Community. The Commission's report to the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament states:

"the Community's approach is to be based on the fullest awareness of all the implications."

Most member states are very hesitant about the authorisation of BST; by contrast, the United Kingdom is regarded as an easy option for a way into Europe for the pharmaceutical companies, as it is the only member state to have allowed BST to be collected and sold unmarked. Why is that the case?

There is concern at the fact that existing techniques do not permit the ready identification of BST in dairy products, because the BST exists naturally in milk. That must give us cause for doubt. Research is currently under way at the university of Munich with the object of finding a method of identifying the hormone in milk in the first place. It is very serious that we cannot do that now, and label it appropriately. BST, if it is to be allowed at all, should not be allowed until such a method is found; otherwise there will be no opportunity for consumer choice. If the method is found, dairy products from BST-treated cattle should be labelled as such.

Concern has also been expressed at the statement by the London Food Commission that artificial BST has one or more extra amino acids at one end of the molecule. The hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) went fully into the matter, so I shall not repeat the argument.

Concern about animal welfare, consequent upon their regular injection, has to be taken into account. There are many questions the answers to which are unknown. What effect will BST have on reproductive performance, on the incidence of mastitis in cows and on calf growth? Will there be an increase in metabolic diseases as a result of BST injection? We do not know the answers to those questions. The Minister said that trials are still taking place. When they have been completed I hope he can give hon. Members answers to all those questions.

As for the socio-economic factors, especially those that relate to small farmers, the Commission's report says that if one assumes that the Community's milk quota regime continues beyond 1992, the use of BST should be reflected in a reduction in the number of cows rather than in an increase in overall milk production. That is likely to be accompanied by a greater concentration of milk production in the hands of larger milk producers an greater pressure on the quota regime. The effect of BST on small dairy farmers is likely to be bad. That must be taken into account, particularly in view of the importance of the family farm. Small dairy producers are often the backbone of production in poorer areas.

Consumer groups have expressed grave concern about BST. They echo public mistrust over the use of such products. The European Commissioner, Mr. MacSharry, said recently that quotas will continue beyond 1992. However, BST may result in the production of milk beyond the quotas. That would lead to a reduction in the price that producers can obtain for their milk. Quotas are here to stay. It has been reported today that most European Community countries are heading for quota surpluses. It is madness, therefore, to administer something that will increase milk production by between 10 and 20 per cent. when we are attempting to achieve a balance between production and consumption.

The dairy industry as a whole, and small dairy farmers in particular, need BST like a hole in the head. It will lead to even greater surpluses and to retrenchment. Consumers are opposed to the administration of BST, straight down the line. Only the pharmaceutical companies will gain. Unless we take on board the fourth criterion, there will be no proper evaluation of the product.

12.43 am

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): My hon. Friends the Members for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) and for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) and the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) have made a formidable case against the Government's policies. I intend to step back a little and consider how this debate might be viewed by members of the public. I shall point to the absurdity of what is being discussed at this late hour—a proposal which comes not from the public at large but from a handful of pharmaceutical companies in order to deal with a problem that does not exist.

The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor has referred to the fact that British agriculture is faced with many problems but that a shortage of milk is not one of them. Yet we are seriously discussing with a whole panoply of states surrounding us a highly dodgy product which the pharmaceutical companies have put before us. We are obliged to react to it and, presumably, to approve it. Whatever lip service is paid to the further tests that will take place and the great care that the Government will take, the Opposition do not think much of those assurances and believe that we are already well on the way to product licences being granted by a Government, and particularly a Ministry of Agriculture, that are in the pockets of vested interests.

We are discussing the basis of food quality in Britain in which the consumer takes second, third or fourth place and in which the initiative lies with the vested interests. They state what they want and MAFF supinely follows. This time it is the pharmaceutical companies; at other times it is agribusiness or the food processing industry—all those huge interests pour money into the Conservative party coffers and on some occasions ask for something back.

We are here tonight not because there is a shortage of milk in Britain or because anyone in the House seriously believes that the quality of production will be improved by BST. We are here tonight at the behest of Eli Lilly and Monsanto as they have developed a product for which

[Mr. Brian Wilson]

they want an outlet and which can be turned into very large profits but the legislative nod is needed from the House and possibly from the European Community.

What would be the impact of BST on rural communities? We know that if it is broadly introduced the yield will be increased by 10 to 20 per cent. The Agra Europe briefing, which is an authoritative document, states:

> "The resulting increase in profitability would tend to increase the demand for and therefore the price of milk quota and provide a further incentive to the less efficient to give up production. The use of BST would therefore accelerate the trend to fewer dairy farms and larger units which has developed during the last two decades."

If it is Government policy further to depopulate rural areas, to drive more family farms out of business, and in constituencies such as mine to say to dairy farmers, "There is now no place for you because we want to maximise the milk yield and maximise production in the fewest hands," the Minister should say that tonight. If that is not Government policy pressing ahead with the consideration of a product for which there is no consumer demand and no rational demand is totally incompatible with healthy rural communities with people working in manageable units which would be eroded by the extension of BST.

We are debating an initiative from the pharmaceutical companies which the Government appear to be playing along with to a greater extent than other European countries. We see that in the labelling of the products. Why is BST coming on to the market by stealth? If the Government are completely satisfied that there is no risk or danger and that everything is entirely in order, why are there any reservations about saying up front to the consumers of milk that what they are getting contains an element of milk which has been produced with the aid of BST? If that is the Government's view, what is the objection to that?

I believe that it is a fraud on consumers—one of many sponsored by MAFF—to produce in any quantity milk that contains any element of milk produced with BST without telling people precisely what they are getting. It is not good enough to say, "We, MAFF, who have been so wrong on so many other things over the past couple of years, say that there is no danger." According to the Minister, we are engaged on a testing programme to discover the implications of BST, but, at the same time, it is being pushed down the throats of British consumers without the common courtesy of telling them what they are getting, which is indefensible.

There is no demand for increased milk production in Britain. We should be protecting the interests of rural communities and milk producers, but the Government are working at the behest of pharmaceutical companies. We are debating BST at 12.50 am because of the initiative of a couple of pharmaceutical companies, which is against the interests of consumers, against the interests of our future agriculture and against the wishes of rural communities in Scotland, many parts of England and, as we have heard, many parts of Wales.

The hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) tried to square a circle. He expressed doubts and engaged in a bit of hand wringing, but he supports the Government's proposals. If he continues to do so, many dairy producers in his constituency and in the constituencies of other hon. Members will be in deep trouble. It was a pity that the hon. Gentleman did not oppose the expansion of BST as firmly as did other hon. Members.

12.51 am

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): My hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) represents a constituency in what used to be called Ayrshire. He rightly spoke up clearly on behalf of dairy producers in his constituency and on behalf of consumers who are concerned about the possible commercial use of this product.

My hon. Friends the Members for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) and for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) and the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) covered many of the detailed arguments against the deployment of this product in the dairy industry in Britain. Under normal circumstances, one would be tempted to ask, "Who on earth supports the use of BST in Britain or anywhere else in Europe?" We have received the answer this evening—the Government and the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway). One must pay tribute to their courage, if not their judgment.

Mr. John Greenway: I made no such statement, as the hon. Gentleman will discover when he reads *Hansard*. I am sorry that he was not listening more carefully. I said that it is unfortunate that the Government are having to face this issue in fighting for the principle of scientific advice being paramount.

Mr. Home Robertson: The hon. Gentleman is doing a spot of back-pedalling. I shall read his speech, perhaps he should do so and I sincerely hope that milk producers in his constituency will read it.

The hon. Gentleman repeated his key point—that scientific criteria should be paramount. He referred to the medicinal and therapeutic properties of BST. That was his crucial error. BST has no medicinal or therapeutic qualities; it is an artificial stimulant that makes cows produce 10 or 20 per cent. more milk. That is not medicinal or therapeutic but purely economic. The hon. Member should get that point straight.

The hon. Member for Ryedale suggested that farmers will be free to use this product if they want to. Surely he must be living in cloud cuckoo land if he thinks that it will be so easy for farmers. If this product comes on to the market, the competitive dynamics of the marketplace will compel farmers to take advantage of it. It is important, therefore, that the House and the European Parliament effectively apply the safeguards that the people of Europe and Britain, and the industry, want.

Apart from the hon. Member for Ryedale and the British Government, who wants BST to be brought into commercial use? It certainly is not the consumer—the hon. Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) made that point clear. It certainly is not the dairy industry, which would not want it because consumers do not want it. The industry certainly does not want a food scare such as has been experienced elsewhere in that industry. The agricultural industry certainly does not want BST. It was made abundantly clear to the House tonight that the National Farmers Unions in all parts of the United Kingdom opposes the approval of this product.

Who is in favour of BST? Monsanto and Eli Lilly—not exactly the most objective bodies in this debate. They want

the House and the European Community to uphold their commercial right to develop a market for their product. This debate, if it is about nothing else, must be about the balance between a company's right to seek a commercial profit from its investment and the broader interests of the consumer and the agricultural and rural economy. That balance should be struck, but it cannot be done if we keep to the narrow scientific criteria about which the hon. Member for Ryedale talked. That is why my hon. Friend the Member for Caerphilly echoed the powerful case, which has been made by the Opposition, that a fourth criterion—the ethical, or socio-economic, criterion—should be met before such a product can be approved.

One may ask, as my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North has asked, why on earth, when there is such an overproduction of milk, have Monsanto and Eli Lilly put such energy into the production of BST? Even without BST, higher yields are likely to make about 400,000 cows redundant in the European Community in the not-so-distant future. These companies are devoting all their expertise to developing a compound to produce even more milk, for which there is no market—a compound that is likely to create great uncertainty and worry in the market.

Why could not those companies have devoted as much energy to producing a veterinary product to deal with the present problems? That is something that the industry and the community need. No, those companies have produced BST and they are hellbent on marketing it and making a profit out of it, regardless of the concerns of consumers, the disruption caused to the industry and a range of other vital considerations.

I put it to the Minister that the narrow criteria of safety, quality and efficacy alone are just not enough. The European Commission is right to take account of the broader criterion of socio-economic factors before sanctioning the use of BST. A precedent was set in a similar industry when the European Community banned the use of hormone growth promoters for beef. We talked about this issue then. There was no evidence that growth promoters in beef had any detectable effect on human beings. On purely scientific grounds, there was no case for a ban, but it was imposed because consumers wanted one. Likewise, consumers want a ban imposed on BST. Just as Governments and the European Community paid heed to consumer concern about hormone growth promoters for beef, they should pay similar heed in this matter.

Monsanto and Eli Lilly have no God-given right to market a product and to make a profit out of a product. They should be within the law. They should act within the constraints of public interest, of which Governments have a duty to take account. We are not talking about a veterinary product. BST has no beneficial therapeutic effects. On the contrary, I should have thought that a regular series of injections into cows has a detrimental effect on animal welfare. We are talking about a specific artificial stimulant which is purely for commercial purposes. That fourth criterion—of socio-economic or ethical considerations—must be adopted for the approval of products of this nature.

We do not intend to divide the House on this issue, although I hope that the Minister has grasped the fact that there is widespread dissatisfaction with his laid-back approach to this case. I think that we can safely depend on our comrades, if we can call them that, in other European countries to out-vote the British Government once again, and to ensure that common sense prevails and that the industry and consumers will be protected. We live in hope, however, that the Minister will take account of public opinion, even if nobody else in the Government will.

1 am

Mr. Curry: With the leave of the House, I should like to reply to the debate.

It will be a major disappointment to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) to know that the Government are perfectly happy to accept the Commission's proposal of a pause for reflection. Indeed, we have already said that. We are not isolated. The matter is perfectly simple. We believe that there is a clear distinction between the licensing process, which is to determine on scientific grounds whether a product is safe, and the political decision whether to accept those results.

We have made it perfectly plain that we accept that there are legitimate concerns about the implications of this product, other than on grounds of safety. Its safety will be determined by the Veterinary Products Committee when it has completed its investigations. It faces many questions. Without any Commission intervention, we would not be able to license this product before at least this time next year. No delay is being imposed. These processes must be gone through exhaustively before we can grant a licence.

We draw a clear distinction between the scientific process and whether, politically, we want to buy the product. That does not cause me the slightest embarrassment. The hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies) said that the Government will be embarrassed. If the Commission makes a proposal, we have to cope with it, just as we had to cope with the proposal on beef hormones. If that is to be quoted as the glorious precedent, I invite the hon. Gentleman to conduct a brief tour of inspection of Europe and see the extent to which the proposal is being enforced and the extent to which hormones still appear in beef, greatly to the deception of EC consumers.

Mr. Ron Davies: Does the Minister understand that he is now saying that he will take a political, ad hoc decision based almost on a whim and the Government's prevailing political thought? Does he understand how worrying that will be to companies that have committed themselves to substantial investment and which need to know that there is an objective and systematic assessment of products that emerge from their research? Does he accept that our proposal of a fourth hurdle would institutionalise such an arrangement so that the companies involved would know the procedures with which they must comply? Without that, they will be subject to political decisions made on a whim.

Mr. Curry: We are not deciding on a whim. The European Community exists, and the Commission is entitled to make a proposal. If it does that, we cannot simply walk out of the room and say that the whole thing is inconvenient. We have to deal with the proposal. That is not whim but political reality. The burden of the hon. Gentleman's speech was that he will somehow introduce scientific criteria to measure something—was it social, economic or ethical considerations? It was not quite clear. If the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that he can devise and incorporate a clear, sharp scientific criterion that will let companies know where they stand, his accusation that we

[Mr. Curry]

are performing intellectual gymnastics will pale into insignificance next to the extraordinary convolutions that he is going through.

Mr. Ron Davies: I promise that this is my last intervention. The Minister has challenged me to produce a criterion. I challenge the Minister. If I produce one, will he implement it?

Mr. Curry: Like everything the hon. Gentleman produces, I should wish to look at it with great care under a microscope. The reason for that is illustrated by his remarks today. He mentioned labelling, as did some of my hon. Friends, and we must be clear about that. It is a difficult issue because of the problems of the identification of BST. In addition, obligatory labelling would be difficult to enforce, in the same way as the beef hormone ban is difficult to enforce. European Community food law prevents a member state from introducing additional national labelling requirements without Community approval. We believe that the Commission's study could look usefully at the whole matter.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ryedale (Mr. Greenway) emphasised the importance of objective criteria and he also said that there is a genuine dilemma for producers. I agree that there is; nobody denies it. That is entirely the purpose of making a distinction between whether a product should be available purely on health and scientific grounds and whether it will be taken up on any other grounds. He asked when the trials will end. As I have just said, we shall be unlikely to be in a position to license before about 12 months from now because of that a number of questions remain to be asked.

The hon. Member for Clwyd, South-West (Mr. Jones) mentioned several detailed issues about the science of this. If he will permit me, I shall reply to him by letter because his points were extremely complicated. I recognise that he has more scientific background than many hon. Members who discuss this matter and I am willing to reply to him in writing. However, I must point out to him that the Farm Animal Welfare Council raised certain matters which have already been referred to the veterinary products committee as part of the criteria that it will use to assess the safety of this product.

I was grateful for the praise of my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) for our record of full and proper evaluation. He said that consumers were not informed at all. We have certain constraints under the Medicines Act 1968, but we have never concealed the fact that milk from the trials goes into the normal supply of milk. I must make it clear to all hon. Members that the only country that does not permit that to happen is the Netherlands. All the other countries in which trials are taking place permit the milk to go unlabelled into the general milk supply. The reason for that is that we were twice advised by the veterinary products committee that that was safe, as the scientists mentioned by the Opposition also advised.

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley, West and Penistone): The Minister does not realise that consumers worry about what is happening to food production, including our pork production. The only point on which I am certain is that more farmers will vote for us this time than ever before. half my milk farmers have already gone out of business because of the quotas and the problems that they have caused. We shall have farmyard crack and the consumer will not know whether the product that he is buying contains it or not. Surely at this early stage we should be looking at how we can inform consumers whether they are buying milk that contains BST.

Mr. Curry: I have already made it clear that, as part of the Commission's review, we are perfectly happy for that matter to be looked at. However, we have also made it clear that we should not have authorised even these minute trials to take place were we not convinced by means of an independent body that those trials were perfectly safe. We cannot take advice other than that presented to us by an impeccable body of scientists. I have here the list of the members of the Veterinary Products Committee.

Mr. Wilson: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Curry: No, because I shall come to the hon. Gentleman's remarks. I do not wish to forgo the pleasure of commenting on them.

The hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) mentioned the social concerns of the small farmer, as I have. I suspect that my constituency is not dissimilar to his. I know what farmers believe on this matter and that is why we have said that we are looking at these other matters, but we do not want them to masquerade as part of the scientific process. We want them to be seen as a separate part of the process. The fourth criterion is for a political decision and I do not want politics masquerading as science because we have seen what has happened in various areas, from fisheries to beef hormones. The real fear for many farmers is that if this permits costs to be cut —there is a case for saying that—it will put pressure on the institutional milk price. I recognise that fear.

There will be careful consideration of all aspects of bovine health, including mastitis. The progeny from treated cows are being assessed from the different lactations of a multi-lactational trial. Therefore, I can give an assurance that those matters are being carefully considered.

The hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) gave me a fleeting reassurance that the Labour party has not been reformed as much as its public relations might indicate that it wanted to. He lifted every phrase straight from the conspirator's handbook. He talked of the highly dodgy product; we were told that we were paying lip service and were in the pockets of the vested interests. In fact, the phrases were lifted not merely from the conspirator's handbook, but from an elderly edition. He should ask the chairman of the VPC, Professor Armour, dean of the school of veterinary medicine at Glasgow university, whether he will subscribe to the description of himself and his team as simply stooges in the pay of the pharmaceutical industry.

We are not forcing this product down the farmers' throats. Nobody is going to ride shotgun on the wagons to force farmers to use this product. We have decided that they should have the choice whether to use it. If they decide to use it, that is their affair. If they decide not to, that is equally their affair.

The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) said that the United Kingdom supports BST. That is not true. I shall not know whether to support it until the VPC has said whether it is a safe product and fulfils the criteria. If it does so and is given a clean bill of

health. I shall clearly support the right for it to be made available. If it is not given a clean bill of health I am equally categoric that it will not be made available because that is the whole purpose of a scientific assessment.

It is not my job to tell Eli Lilly or Monsanto how to spend their money. If they decide to devote it to pharmaceutical research and them come to me and say that they have developed a product which they wish to have assessed, under the Medicines Act 1968 I must submit that product to an evaluation process. I cannot say, "I'm sorry, but the Act is not for you, today," or "We do not like the implications of what you are going to do. Go away."

If I were to take such action and introduce into the assessment process a pseudo-scientific criterior masquerading as science, those companies would not come at all, but would take their business elsewhere which would be to the great detriment of everybody in the United Kingdom and the European Community.

The hon. Member for East Lothian persists in his unwillingness to accept that there is good will among Conservative Members. We have products which we are obliged to assess on the grounds of certain objective criteria. That is the right way to go about this, and it has served us well in the past. The VPC has thrown out the majority of applications that it has assessed this year under these very criteria. Therefore, it is quite right that we should proceed in this way.

In this rough old world in which we live, if the Commission comes forward with a proposal we must react to it. We want the Commission to make that assessment as sensibly and objectively as it can. If we then have to vote upon it, we must do so. If that results in decisions being taken on political grounds, and the Council of Ministers has a majority to make those decisions, that is what will happen. We have already seen it happen with the beef hormone proposal.

We do not want to try to confuse the issue and say that we should move away completely from the principle of the objective assessment of these products. If we do that, we shall rapidly descend into an extremely confused approach to our treatment of future technology. We have not denied this in the past in the United Kingdom or turned our back on it. If we start to do so, we have little future as a country in which technology has a fair home. I do not think that any hon. Member would wish that to happen, which is why I ask the House to support the Government.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8975/89 relating to bovine somatotropin; and supports the Government's policy that the basis for authorising such products must be a thorough, scientific appraisal to confirm their safety.

PRIVILEGES

Ordered,

That Mr. Secretary Wakeham and Mr. Frank Dobson be discharged from the Committee of Privileges and that Sir Geoffrey Howe and Dr. John Cunningham be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

Vietnamese Boat People

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Greg Knight.]*

1.14 am

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): At this time in the morning, I am grateful to the Minister for being here to answer the debate.

It is a sad reflection that this brief Adjournment debate is the first opportunity that the House has had to discuss the implications of the shift in Government policy towards the repatriation of Vietnamese boat people. The announcement was made by the right hon. Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major) during his brief tenure as Foreign Secretary. During his one Foreign Office Question Time appearance at the Dispatch Box, he signalled the Government's decision to abandon attempts to resettle the 56,718 Vietnamese people in Hong Kong. Instead, involuntary repatriation, compulsory repatriation, mandatory repatriation, or an orderly return programme are to be the cornerstone of our future approach.

If words have any meaning at all, involuntary and mandatory mean forcible. If these are mere euphemisms and Foreign Office code, perhaps the Minister will use this debate to explain exactly what the Government have in mind.

Certainly Mr. Lionel Bloch, Sir Robin Day, Lords Havers and McAlpine of Moffat, and Mr. Gerard Noel, writing in *The Times* today are clear enough in their understanding of Government policy. In a brief letter they say:

"Sir, why does the British Government not appeal openly and urgently to the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India and members of the EC, to take some of the Hong Kong boat people? Their forcible repatriation would be repugnant to all right thinking people."

Recent events in Eastern Europe and elsewhere in south-east Asia have demonstrated deep contradictions in Government policy. On the very day after the Prime minister, in her Guildhall speech, hailed the march to freedom in Europe, it is worth questioning for a moment our double standards. The Prime Minister, and I agree with her, said:

"We should recognise how immensely privileged we are to be living in these historic times, how fortunate to have a share of responsibility for the way events unfold."

As millions of Europeans have flooded across East-West borders, and thousands have decided to stay, no one has suggested as the Under-Secretary of State did in a letter to me on 26 October that

"their future can only lie in their own country."

Why is it an historic event when thousands of economic migrants flee from a drab life in East Germany, and a contemporary inconvenience when they flee from Vietnam? How do we reconcile our good fortune in being able to share in the responsibility of the unfolding events in central and eastern Europe while we try to evade our responsibility towards desperate, frightened refugees seeking shelter and sanctuary in a Crown colony?

Even deeper contradictions concern the way in which we screen the Vietnamese migrants and attempt to classify them as economic and political refugees: goats and sheep. Imagine for a moment the worldwide outcry if East Germans had been subjected to the following procedures. Mr. Yan Ji Shieh of Refugee Action—an offshoot of the Save the Children Fund—has provided me with

[Mr. David Alton]

documentary evidence which the Minister needs to address. Refugee Action says that the language translation available during screening interviews is often wholly inadequate—and is actually conducted in three different languages; interviewees have no chance to prepare themselves and have no representation at the interviews; and a very narrow interpretation is made under the 1951 United Nations convention of what we think constitutes as a refugee.

If an interviewee answers the first question by saying that he wants to make a better life for his family he will automatically be screened out as an econom.. refugee. Among those who have been screened out, and denied political status, are former soldiers from the south. If they fail to qualify, it is little wonder that very few others get through the net.

Inevitably, any such dubious exercise will never be foolproof and is bound to lead to personally disastrous decisions. Refugee Action says that the atmosphere during interviews is often appalling; and that United Nations High Commission for Refugees officers have witnessed shouting and abuse. I hope that the Minister will say something about the rising tensions within the camps as refugees become more and more desperate. I am sure that he will have seen some of the reports last week concerning some of the events in the camp.

It is surely worth recalling that before these interviews and subsequent refusals, many refugees have spent long years festering in squalid camps. Before that they faced long and harrowing voyages through the perilous South China seas. I have heard first-hand accounts of brutal assaults, rape, and murder as refugees lost everything in their bid for freedom and a better life. It is absurd to suggest that their decision to leave Vietnam was a soft option.

In comparison with Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, which have at times forcibly repelled the boat people, the Hong Kong Government are to be congratulated on their humanitarian policy in acting as a place of first asylum. They have done their best to accommodate successive waves of refugees; but no one who has visited the closed camps can seriously describe the atrocious conditions as anything other than totally and utterly unacceptable. The initial willingness of the western countries to assist in resettlement was overcome in 1986 by a bad case of compassion fatigue. So far in 1989, only 3,393 refugees have been resettled from Hong Kong—a mere 149 in the United Kingdom. Does it not say something about life in Vietnam that, knowing all of this —all the obstacles and impediments that would be placed in their way—the refugees have continued to come?

Here is another contradiction in Government policy. Last night, in another debate, the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave), explained that the Government's decision to end aid to Vietnam in 1979

"was related to Vietnam's policies on human rights, the exodus of boat people and the Cambodian invasion."

He said that Vietnam's international rehabilitation will

"need a negotiated settlement, not a trial of strength on the battlefield."—[*Official Report*, 13 November 1989; Vol. 160, c. 51.]

So the Government, in refusing to restore the aid programme, have indicated their abhorrence of the regime in Vietnam. The irony is that a restored aid programme linked to assisting farmers retain a greater proportion of the rice yield might actually help to end the exodus. Certainly, the British Refugee Council tells me that it favours its urgent restoration.

But the Government cannot have it both ways. If the human rights record is so bad that we cannot give aid, how can we have confidence in what will happen to refugees forced to return there?

Refugee Action says that after 15 years many former civil servants and many members of the army are still in re-education centres, deep in the jungles. It pours scorn on the idea that it will be possible to monitor the long-term retaliatory action taken against people who are forced back. After all, it is still a serious crime to leave Vietnam. And what are we to make of a country that denies freedom of movement, impedes travel overseas, and deters free speech or a free press? Refugee Action has evidence that 1,700 refugees who escaped on the last day of the war and returned in 1975 from Guam all disappeared. One re-escaped and described in detail how he had subsequently suffered.

I help to sponsor an all-party group, the Jubilee Campaign, which campaigns for Christian prisoners of conscience. I can provide the Minister with chapter and verse about Vietnamese prisoners of faith. Indeed, the Secretary of State for Defence is kindly currently sponsoring one such case: that of Nguyen Van Tuoi. In 1983 he was arrested and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He was assistant to Pastor Ho Hieu Ha, whose church was seized and turned into a Communist Youth League headquarters, and who was sent to jail for eight years. Both are still in detention at Chi Hoa prison in Ho Chi Minh City.

Or there is the case of Father Dominique Tran Din Thu. He was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987. His sentence was later reduced to 20 years—hardly a concession for an 83-year-old man. He and 15 other priests and monks from his order are now in a re-education camp.

Another priest in prison in Vietnam is Father Joseph Nguyen Cong Doan, the regional superior of the Jesuits. He was gaoled for 12 years in 1981. He had obtained a Communist party document which called

"for the extermination of the Church, and principally its bishops and priests."

Amnesty International adds credence to the reports which the Jubilee Campaign has received. In its 1989 report, it lists details of the persecution of Buddhists and the continued detention of prisoners of conscience.

While thinking about these reports, I was struck this morning by an account in *The Independent* newspaper which described the 1945 decision to send back the Yugoslavs to Marshall Tito. Captain Nigel Nicolson yesterday told the court in the Aldington libel action that the refugees

"had appealed to us for asylum, which we had granted them. They had come to trust us and now we had to break the trust and send them back to their arch-enemy."

It is not idle fancy to see parallels with the position of the Vietnamese asylum-seekers today.

Surely Ministers can see that involuntary repatriation will lead to vindictive retaliatory acts over which the British Government will have no effective subsequent control. Surely they can see the damage that will be done to our international reputation.

The new Foreign Secretary is a man who knows the value of compassion. Like his West German counterpart, who effectively responded to human need, he should now put his energies into finding a sane and decent solution which does not involve forcible repatriation; 56,000 people are little more than half the number who constitute a capacity crowd at Wembley. It cannot be beyond the wit of the civilised world to resettle them. When the Prime Minister and President Bush meet next week, I hope that Foreign Office Ministers will be urging that the need for a concerted international response based on responsibility and compassion will be high on their agenda.

1.27 am

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Francis Maude): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) for raising an issue which has attracted a great deal of attention and which, I have no doubt, will continue to do so. However, I regret the terms in which he raised a number of the issues involved. Frankly, he reported some matters in a way which did not reflect the true position, and I shall deal with some of them.

The issue of the Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong was discussed nearly two years ago in the Christmas Adjournment debate, and once again in the Christmas Adjournment debate of last year. On both occasions, serious issues were raised by my hon. Friends which were addressed responsibly and realistically by the present Minister of State, Department of Employment, who was then a Minister at the Foreign Office.

It must be clear that this is not an issue which brings pleasure to the Ministers who bear responsibility for it. It is, above all, a human problem which demands a humane and humanitarian response. It is also an issue where the commentaries and some of the commentators have simply not kept up with the pace of the events.

The simple fact is that the situation is now dramatically different from what obtained when the debate took place in late 1987. At that stage, all those Vietnamese who arrived in Hong Kong were deemed to be refugees, whether or not they were so in reality.

The international community had and has responded magnificently to a flow of refugees over many years and it is important to stress that undertakings have been given to resettle every refugee in the west. However, by the middle of 1988, it had become clear that the nature of the exodus from Vietnam had changed. That had begun to emerge as early as 1981. At that stage, a congressional committee in the United States had a staff report which said:

"It is true to most observers that the character of the boat people flow has changed, even as it continues relentlessly . . . from numerous interviews with Vietnamese boat people in the field, especially in Hong Kong, it is clear that a growing number of Vietnamese boat people are risking flight primarily for economic reasons. A classic 'migrant' flow is developing."

That quotation goes back to 1981. Seven years after that it was decided by Hong Kong—I think that its decision was right—that a different approach was necessary. From June 1988, a screening system was instituted. The purpose of this was quite clear: to determine which of those coming to Hong Kong were genuine refugees and which were economic migrants seeking a better life in a more prosperous country.

The hon. Member for Mossley Hill has referred to screening, and it is important to understand what it is. It is not a process which is unique to boat people in Hong Kong; it is a process that is applied worldwide to all those, from whatever country, travelling to whatever country, who claim to be refugees. It must be absolutely apparent that it is essential if civilised countries are to continue to provide new homes for genuine refugees, as they wish to do, that there should be some system for determining who is a genuine refugee and who is not. In truth, the process of screening varies around the world. For example, those seeking to enter the United States from Haiti are subjected to a rudimentary form of scrutiny on board ship before their feet even touch the soil of the United States. Only a tiny number are determined by the authorities to be refugees.

In contrast, the system of screening introduced in mid-1988 in Hong Kong is sophisticated, elaborate and thorough. The procedures were developed not at the whim of the Hong Kong Government but in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the questions which asylum seekers are asked are based on a questionnaire that is set out by the UNHCR. All interviews—I stress this for the benefit of the hon. Member for Mossley Hill—can be monitored by UNHCR staff.

The hon. Member for Mossley Hill referred disparagingly, I thought, to the fact that the questions are framed in three languages. They are in English, Chinese and Vietnamese, which are the relevant languages. Surely that is a matter for praise rather than disparagement.

Mr. Alton: I was bringing to the Minister's attention the complaint of the organisation that is called Refugee Action, which says that the immigration officer asks the questions from a UNHCR-prepared questionnaire in Cantonese. This is translated by an official Hong Kong Government interpreter into Vietnamese. The refugee's response is translated by the interpreter into Cantonese first and then into English. Notes are taken in English. Interpreters must pass a test, but their knowledge of Vietnamese is often inadequate. Officials often deviate from the questionnaire. That does not correspond with the brief with which the Minister has been supplied.

Mr. Maude: The interviews can be monitored by the UNHCR, which takes a close interest in the process. So far as I am aware, no complaints have been made about the process, which is subject to independent scrutiny. Independent observers can be present, and that is proper. There is no other process of which I am aware which is subject to the same degree of independent scrutiny which is that elaborate, that thorough and that independent. In most instances, the process elsewhere is far more rudimentary. In addition to the interview process, there is a full appeals process, and the UNHCR can help candidates to prepare their appeal.

I have satisfied myself that the screening process that is now in place is both fair and thorough. The results of the screening so far confirm how right it was to institute the procedure. So far, only about 13 per cent. of those arriving in Hong Kong have been determined to be refugees. The remaining 87 per cent.—nearly nine out of 10—are determined, without dispute by the UNHCR, not to be refugees.

The hon. Member for Mossley Hill talked about the journey from Vietnam being dangerous and stressful and not an easy option. The bulk of those now arriving in Hong Kong do not set off in a boat from Vietnam to cross the sea unaided. Many of them come by public transport

[Mr. Maude]

across the mainland through China and travel only the last five miles by boat. The ones that do travel by boat generally coast hop from port to port. The journey is by no means as dangerous as it was made out to be. I accept that the phrase "Vietnamese bus people" does not have quite the same ring as "Vietnamese boat people", but the mundane reality is that many of those now arriving in Hong Kong are bus people more than boat people.

The need for this process was borne out by the Geneva conference of 1989, which agreed on the comprehensive plan of action, endorsing the principle of first asylum, and recommending measures to guarantee its survival, which might otherwise have been under threat from others from Hong Kong. It is important to stress that this plan of action was and is designed to sustain the policy of first asylum to which Hong Kong is properly committed. These measures were, first, the adoption of screening throughout the region, along the lines of that already being used in Hong Kong.

The problem in Hong Kong was already far more intense than anywhere else in the region, partly as a result of the sheer numbers of boat people, and partly because of the desperate pressure on land in the territory. We should not forget that Hong Kong has 5·7 million people in 400 square miles of extremely mountainous terrain. It was entirely right, therefore, that Hong Kong should, with our full support, have instituted this elaborate and fair system of screening when it did.

As a result, there were two quite distinct problems to be resolved. The first—it has been much muddled by many commentators, including the hon. Gentleman—was how to resettle all who were either deemed or determined to be refugees. On this issue, the conference agreed on the resettlement of all the refugees in the region, with sufficient places pledged by the resettlement countries to guarantee a new home for them all within three years. The United Kingdom has throughout played its full part in this process, and it will continue to do so.

The second, and I stress quite distinct, issue was: what should be the fate of those who were determined not to be refugees? On this second issue, which is what should principally concern us tonight, the conference agreed this:

"Persons determined not to be refugees should return to their country of origin in accordance with international practices reflecting the responsibilities of states towards their own citizens. In the first instance, every effort will be made to encourage the voluntary return of such persons."

I stress to the House that that agreement was unanimous. Not a single participant at the June conference in Geneva —not the United States of America, not the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—dissented from that conclusion.

And so there is unanimous agreement throughout the international community that for those Vietnamese in Hong Kong who are not deemed to be refugees, there is and can be nowhere to go but Vietnam. And to those who argue glibly that there should be some great international effort to resettle non-refugees in the West, I say that not a country in the world will agree to it. It has already been tried, and it will not happen. It is dangerous and callous to suggest to people in this position that some great remedy lies around the corner. It does not and will not exist, not because of our decision but because of the unanimous decision of the international community.

The hon. Gentleman drew an analogy with East Germans arriving in West Germany. People can exercise the right of movement between countries only when there are countries that allow them to leave and countries that are prepared to receive them. We strongly support the right of people to leave their country of origin if they choose to, but it must be up to other countries to decide whether to accept them. I am glad that West Germany has decided that it will receive people—that is a matter for the West German Government. But the international community has dwelt at length on this problem and its unanimous conclusion was that no country is prepared to take Vietnamese people who are deemed not to be refugees——

Mr. Alton: Have not the British Government thrown open military bases in West Germany and magnanimously provided places in which East German refugees can stay? Surely that contrasts with the Minister's attitude tonight. I hope that in the time that is left he will face the issue of what will happen to these refugees when they return to Vietnam. How will it be possible to monitor what happens to them? What will become of our international reputation if we are seen to use force to send people back from the refugee camps?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman makes a good comparison. He talks about the British Government making available temporary accommodation in Berlin for people seeking to move. Yes, we have done so—in the same way that, over the years, the Hong Kong Government have made available accommodation at a cost of some £100 million a year; a cost borne jointly by us and by the Hong Kong Government. They have made that accommodation available for people while they are being screened and for those deemed or determined to be refugees pending resettlement. The parallel is an exact one. We shall always accept such obligations in a spirit of generosity.

The problem with the hon. Gentleman's approach is that he seeks to turn that temporary accommodation in Hong Kong into permanent accommodation by denying the only route that the international community has agreed, which is that they should go back to Vietnam.

The issue that we have to face is a stark one which, I regret to say, brooks no equivocation. It is not comfortable and it is not one that any hon. Member would like to have to face, but the issue is whether we are to leave people in closed camps in Hong Kong with no hope of resettlement elsewhere when the international community has unanimously accepted that the only place for them to go is back to Vietnam.

Everyone who has faced the problem and has borne responsibility for its resolution has come to the same conclusion. We have all approached it in the same way, not seeking a convenient solution, not trying to brush the problem away, but testing our decision against the criteria of decency, humanity and justice.

Our conclusion has been that the process of voluntary repatriation has not provided and cannot provide an adequate solution. So far, of the 3,000 people who, after screening, have been determined not to be refugees, only 37, about 1 per cent. have volunteered to return. Faced with the choice of leaving those people in closed camps indefinitely, perhaps in the false hope that resettlement awaits them—a false hope stirred up by the hon.

Gentleman tonight—or returning them in safety and dignity to Vietnam, we have no doubt that we must do the latter.

I strongly support what my right hon. Friend the Member for Huntingdon (Mr. Major) said on 25 October:

"It will soon be necessary to tackle the thorny question of involuntary repatriation."—[*Official Report*, 25 October 1989; Vol. 158, c. 828]

That is not a euphemism. "Forcible repatriation" is an emotive term and it should not be used in this context. The process of deportation is used widely throughout the world according to international standards. When a country deports illegal immigrants—that is what these people are—no assurances are sought from the home country on the safety of those returning. No arrangements are usually made for monitoring their condition and safety. But we believe that, because of the concern that has been expressed, it would be wrong for the process to start without assurances from the Vietnam Government that those who return will not be punished or badly treated and, perhaps more importantly, that their conditions after return can be properly and independently monitored.

As I have said, it is exceptional to attach such conditions to the deportation of illegal immigrants; a process, I stress, which happens across the world every day. The Hong Kong authorities have responded magnificently to a problem the scale of which we may not fully understand from the comfort of Westminster.

In the course of this year, no fewer than 33,000 boat people have arrived, sometimes at the rate of 1,000 a day. But no matter how hard the authorities worked to provide good conditions in the camps, the fact is that all the camps are 50 per cent. over capacity and people and families are living in closed camps and overcrowded conditions.

As I have said, there is nowhere for those people to go other than back to Vietnam and if conditions are unacceptable in those camps, as the hon. Gentleman suggests, it is all the more shameful that he should be suggesting that they should be made to stay there indefinitely.

Mr. Alton: I am not saying that.

Mr. Maude: No hon. Member believes that the decent and humane solution to the problem is to leave people in the camps, living out their lives in the fading belief that the West will accept them——

The Motion having been made after Ten o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at sixteen minutes to Two o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 15 November 1989

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

PRIVATE BILLS *[Lords]* (SUSPENSION)

Motion made,

That so much of the Lords Messages [2nd November, 7th November and 8th November] as relates to the River Tees Barrage and Crossing Bill *[Lords]*, the Happisburgh Lighthouse Bill *[Lords]*, the Great Yarmouth Port Authority Bill *[Lords]*, the Southampton Rapid Transit Bill *[Lords]*, the Heathrow Express Railway Bill *[Lords]*, the London Local Authorities (No. 2) Bill *[Lords]* and the Greater Manchester (Light Rapid Transit System) Bill *[Lords]* be now considered.

That this House doth concur with the Lords in their Resolution.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

PENZANCE ALBERT PIER EXTENSION BILL

Motion made,

That so much of the Lords Message [2nd November] as relates to the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill be now considered.

That the Promoters of the Penzance Albert Pier Extension Bill shall have leave to suspend proceedings thereon in order to proceed with the Bill in the next Session of Parliament, provided that the Agents for the Bill give notice to the Clerks in the Private Bill Office of their intention to suspend further proceedings not later than the day before the close of the present Session and that all fees due on the Bill up to that date be paid;

That on the fifth day on which the House sits in the next Session the Bill shall be presented to the House;

That there shall be deposited with the Bill a declaration signed by the Agents for the Bill, stating that the Bill is the same, in every respect, as the Bill at the last stage of its proceedings in this House in the present Session;

That the Bill shall be laid upon the Table of the House by one of the Clerks in the Private Bill Office on the next meeting of the House after the day on which the Bill has been presented and, when so laid, shall be read the first, second and third time and shall be recorded in the Journal of this House as having been so read;

That no further Fees shall be charged in respect of any proceedings on the Bill in respect of which Fees have already been incurred during the present Session;

That these Orders be Standing Orders of the House.—*[The Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Hon. Members: Object.

To be considered on Monday 20 November.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (PENALTY FARES) BILL *[Lords]*

Ordered,

That Standing Order 205 (Notice of third reading) be suspended in respect of the British Railways (Penalty Fares) Bill *[Lords]* and that the Bill be now read the third time.—*[The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means.]*

Read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

Electricity Generation

1. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has for meeting the heads of the electricity generating boards in Scotland to discuss future electricity generation.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): I meet the chairmen of the Scottish electricity boards from time to time to discuss a wide range of issues affecting the industry, including future electricity generation.

Mr. Eadie: With regard to the discussions that the Secretary of State has had, or will have, does not his conscience trouble him? Is he not fully responsible for the destruction of the Scottish coal industry, in the stupid belief that nuclear energy is cheaper than coal?

Mr. Rifkind: I remind the hon. Gentleman as kindly as I can that the Labour Government of which he was such a distinguished member took the initial decision to build Torness nuclear power station and continued with the Hunterston power stations. As the hon. Gentleman was an energy Minister in that Government, I think that he had better look to his own record before he seeks to criticise others.

Mr. Allan Stewart: My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware that the heads of the generating boards are anxious that the Scottish flotation should go ahead as fast as possible—either before or certainly at the head of the list of English flotations. Can my right hon. and learned Friend say anything about the timing, particularly as export opportunities have been increased by recent announcements?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct that the export opportunities have improved. That will also benefit the coal industry, to which the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) referred. The consequences of the announcement that I made last week will be in one respect easier to implement in Scotland than south of the border. We had already decided to put nuclear power stations into a freestanding Scottish nuclear company. That makes the organisational changes easier to apply to the new arrangements.

Mrs. Ray Michie: In view of the uncertainty in the electricity industry following the shambles last week and the unknown increase in nuclear costs, how does the Secretary of State intend to protect the small electricity producers which at present sell their product to the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board? The payment to them has already been reduced by 7 per cent. since 1986.

Mr. Rifkind: The precise arrangements between the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board and small producers in the Highlands and Islands is a matter for the contractual relations between the board and the companies in question. Nothing that was announced last week will change that. I very much hope that the small, independent producers will continue to play what will

inevitably be a modest part, because of surplus capacity in Scotland, but nevertheless an important part in electricity generation during the next few years.

Sir Peter Emery: As part of my right hon. and learned Friend's negotiations could affect the whole of the British Isles, can he assure the House that in view of its great importance to the nation, the distinguished research work on fast breeders carried out at Dounreay will be encouraged to continue?

Mr. Rifkind: Dounreay and its activities are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. However, I know that those who work at Dounreay and the Department of Energy are interested in a diversification of the research work carried out there. I very much hope that that will prove to be possible. As for the economic implications of the decision on Dounreay, I think that announcements to be made later today will outline useful opportunities for the Highlands and Islands Development Board to diversify economic opportunities in the north of Scotland.

Mr. Dewar: I certainly do not wish to dwell on the shambles that has been created in the Scottish electricity industry in recent weeks by a Government who seem to equate disorganised retreat with a planned policy. Let me invite the Secretary of State to look to the future. Has he seen the article by Patrick Donovan in *The Guardian* today which suggests that Ministers are still hoping to offset nuclear liabilities against the private sector and that the Scottish companies have been asked to agree higher than expected terms for the purchase of nuclear power? Is there any truth in that, and will the Secretary of State confirm what I think was said by the Minister of State on television last week: that there will be continuity of pricing and no attempt to save the Treasury's embarrassment at the expense of the consumer?

Mr. Rifkind: As a central part of my comments last week, I said that there would be no adverse implications for tariffs as a result of last week's announcement. I add that tariff continuity, which is the principle that we have enunciated, is of great importance to us. As nuclear represents a higher proportion of the industry in Scotland compared with the industry in England and Wales, there are implications for what would be the rate of return on nuclear investment. We have explained to the nuclear company, the South of Scotland electricity board and the hydro board the basic principle that should be accommodated to ensure that tariff implications for the general public are no different from what they would have been had the whole industry been privatised.

Hospital Laboratory Services

2. **Mr. Watson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had, or intends to have, with the medical profession in Scotland relating to the proposed privatisation of hospital laboratory services.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I am not aware of any proposals to privatise hospital laboratory services. Boards are reviewing the way in which services are provided and giving consideration to the scope for putting out certain elements to competitive tender.

Mr. Watson: Is it not ironic that today Opposition Members should feel it necessary to seek reassurance from the Minister on such a basic health matter as consultation with doctors? On this day in 1922 a general election was held at which for the first time we returned a large number of Labour Members, including the "Red Clydesiders". A major plank of that election manifesto was free and comprehensive health care for all. Yet 67 years later the Minister is determined to deny just that. Will he at least guarantee that in future, before introducing any further so-called health reforms, he will listen to and take account of the views of the medical profession in Scotland?

Mr. Forsyth: The irony is that we should receive advice from the Labour party on the National Health Service. The Labour party in government cut spending on the Health Service and cut nurses' pay. As a result of competitive tendering, about £53 million has become available to the Health Service in Scotland. The Opposition opposed that, but it is equivalent to—*[Interruption.]* Hon. Gentlemen do not like to hear the truth about the Health Service. The savings from competitive tendering to date in Scotland are equivalent to something like 18,000 additional hip replacements. I certainly give my backing to the management in the Health Service as they continue to get the best deal for patients.

Mr. Favell: Can my hon. Friend explain why the Scots are so opposed to value for money in the National Health Service? As a Yorkshireman—like the Scots, we have a reputation for being careful—I am astonished that the Scots should be so canny about their private affairs yet are prepared to pay through the nose for their public services.

Mr. Forsyth: With all due respect to my hon. Friend, he must not make the mistake of confusing the Scots with the Labour party and Labour Members. It is certainly true that Labour Members of Parliament have opposed competitive tendering in the Health Service and value for money. That is because they speak for the public sector trade unions, while we speak for the patients.

Mr. Sillars: The hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) should not confuse the Scottish people with the Minister either. Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the moves made by Greater Glasgow health board? Will he talk to the health board and explain that it is unacceptable for patients to have their medical needs set against the need for profit of a private company, particularly in the important diagnostic services?

Mr. Forsyth: The Greater Glasgow health board needs no advice from me on putting the interests of patients first. Services will be put out to competitive tender to improve their quality and to obtain value for money. The hon. Gentleman should not prejudge this matter. By organising laboratory services differently, a faster service offering better results more quickly for patients may be achieved. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would give management of the Greater Glasgow health board his backing for seeking to ensure the best interests of patients.

Mr. Worthington: Recently, Opposition Members had the advantage of visiting the Greater Glasgow health board, where we saw a most demoralised collection not of public sector unions but of consultants. They had discovered that their services had been advertised in an obscure European Community journal. Does the Minister

agree that that is a damaging way to run the Health Service? Will he acknowledge that pathology, clinical, research and teaching services are an integral part of the Health Service? To encourage his appointed puppets on the Greater Glasgow health board to split up services so that they can make nice little earners is no way to run the National Health Service. Will he condemn that, as did the Prime Minister when she said that there was no intention to privatise the Health Service?

Mr. Forsyth: The journal which the hon. Gentleman described as obscure was the "European Journal". The advertisement was not for contracts with the Greater Glasgow health board but asked for expressions of interest in the provision——

Mr. Worthington: It invited tenders.

Mr. Forsyth: If the hon. Gentleman knows the answers to the questions, I am surprised that he bothers to ask them. The advertisement was placed in the journal to establish whether firms with the necessary expertise and ability might be able to assist Greater Glasgow health board to offer the best possible service to patients. Once again, an Opposition Front Bench spokesman makes it perfectly clear that he puts the interests of the public sector unions and the briefings that he receives from particular interests in the Health Service above the interests of patients.

Mr. John Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree that it is high time that Labour Members stopped inventing scares that merely cause concern to the elderly and the ill and recognised that a record number of patients are being treated by a record number of doctors and nurses? The Health Service can look forward to more good news later this afternoon.

Mr. Forsyth: I agree with my hon. Friend. The building programme of the Health Service in Scotland is the biggest in its history. In Scotland a major new hospital extension has been built every two months since the Government took office. More patients are being treated and a wider range of services is being offered, which is due in part to the success of general management. Unfortunately, the Labour party seems to oppose every innovation. It opposed competitive tendering but supported those who went on strike, thereby leading to patients having their operations cancelled. Patients will benefit from the courage and determination of the management of the Health Service, who receive no support from the Labour party.

Mr. Speaker: I think that I am at fault for allowing this question to go wide. I thought that I heard the Minister say that there was no intention to privatise hospital laboratory services. May we now please stick more closely to the questions on the Order Paper?

Council of Fisheries Ministers

3. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he intends to attend personally the next European Council of Fisheries Ministers.

Mr. Rifkind: Scottish Office Ministers attend Fisheries Councils whenever possible, and in all cases where matters of direct importance to Scotland are being discussed. I hope to attend the Fisheries Council meeting scheduled for December.

Mr. Wallace: I congratulate the Secretary of State on what I think will be his debut at a Fisheries Council meeting. Will the meeting discuss the steps that the British Government and other Community nations are taking to reach the targets set under the multi-annual guidance programme? Before the right hon. and learned Gentleman goes to that meeting, will he persuade his colleagues in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Treasury to show more willingness to implement a decommissioning programme? Many people in the industry believe that such a programme is necessary if the industry is to be managed properly so that it can face the present great crisis.

Mr. Rifkind: As yet, we cannot be certain about the details of the December meeting, although it is likely that total allowable catches will be discussed.

There are different views and great uncertainty about the principle of a decommissioning scheme. There was a decommissioning scheme in the past which was severely criticised by the Public Accounts Committee and the National Audit Office. We must take that into account before concluding whether another such scheme would be appropriate.

Mr. Younger: I welcome my right hon. and learned Friend's intention to be present at these meetings when required. Can he assure the House that he will be in the closest possible contact with the Scottish fishing industry during the negotiations? I ask him not to hesitate to make it clear that, although times may be difficult, the position would be incomparably worse if stocks were to be overfished, making them of no use in the future.

Mr. Rifkind: I welcome my right hon. Friend back to our deliberations on these occasions. We value highly our close liaison with the Scottish Fishermen's Federation and other fishing organisations. I met leaders of the fishing industry on Monday and my noble Friend the Minister of State had a further meeting with its representatives yesterday. There is general agreement that those who have the long-term interests of the industry at heart must take account of the best evidence that we have on fishing stocks. Clearly, it would be against the interests of the communities that depend on fishing if stocks were overfished, thereby denying a future to one of Scotland's important industries.

Mr. Robert Hughes: Is the Secretary of State aware that the sudden closure last week of the North sea haddock fishery left the Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation with 600 tonnes of haddock for the remainder of the year? This will deprive fish producers of their catch and of about £1 million in revenue. Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that there appear to be proposals on the table for a further cut of haddock quotas of 30 per cent. compared with last year, and for another severe cut in cod quotas? This leaves the management of North sea fishing in an absolute shambles. Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that we need a sensible, rational, planned system of fisheries management if fishing communities throughout the country, especially in the north-east of Scotland, are not to face total ruin?

Mr. Rifkind: The fish processors' organisations have made it especially clear to the Government and to the wider community that they strongly believe in the need to conserve fishing stocks because overfishing would not be in the interests of their industry. The Scottish Fishermen's Federation has made some sensible and attractive proposals on possible improvements to conservation measures. The Government believe that the federation is reacting constructively and helpfully. We intend to build on its proposals with regard to the possible introduction of new conservation requirements. We have recently published a consultative document on licence aggregation to help to deal with the problem of capacity. That, too, will be a useful contribution to making progress.

Sir Michael Shaw: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware of the strong feeling among English fishermen, especially on the Yorkshire and north-east coast, that there has been serious overfishing of haddock stocks in Scotland and that, because of a lack of control over Scottish fishing, my fishermen are being denied their rightful quota, on which they depend at this time of year? Will my right hon. and learned Friend make the Fisheries Council aware that next year we expect to have a compensatory increase in our quota and we expect measures to be taken to ensure that overfishing in Scotland does not continue?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend will appreciate that at present there is neither a Scottish nor a Yorkshire quota for haddock. It is for the producer organisations to try to ensure, in the administration of the scheme, the best use of the available quotas. There has been some controversy not simply between Yorkshire and Scotland, but within Scotland on whether certain stocks have been overfished by some producer organisations to the disadvantage of others. That suggests that better administration of the scheme by the producer organisations may be appropriate.

Mr. Wilson: The Secretary of State will want to reconsider, in the light of advice, his statement, that there is no Scottish haddock quota. We noted in the press this morning a report that the "Buchan bulldog" is to return as a member of the A-team of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), to revive the fortunes of the Scottish Conservative party. For starters, the "Buchan bulldog" should get his teeth into the Secretary of State and force him to do something for the Scottish fishing industry. Does the Secretary of State accept that there is a huge credibility gap between scientists and Scottish fishermen in the assessment of stocks, especially haddock, and will he tell us how much independent judgment is exercised by scientific advisers in Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: Scottish fishermen will note the hon. Gentleman's frivolous approach to their present difficulties. The Commission and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland both receive scientific advice. It is in the interests of the fishing industry that, if the advice coincides, our attitude towards quotas is based on it. Our attitude cannot be based on aspirations or on a desire to maximise fishing irrespective of the implications for the long-term health of fish stocks. That might bring some short-term relief, but it would bring long-term criticism, and Her Majesty's Government would not wish to follow that course.

GPs' Contracts

4. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the medical profession on general practitioners' contracts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I met the Scottish general medical services committee twice earlier this year and on 16 March I wrote to all general practitioners in Scotland seeking their views on the terms of a new contract. My right hon. and learned Friend and I met representatives of the medical profession on 12 April when I wrote again to all GPs with proposals for changes to the contract in Scotland. My right hon. and learned Friend was also represented at about 100 hours of meetings with the profession's national negotiators which resulted in agreement being reached on 4 May.

Mr. Hogg: Apart from the Minister's well-publicised clones in Chester street, who agrees with the Government's proposals? Would it not be a good idea for the Minister to take the advice of the Secretary of State, as advanced at the Tory party conference, and listen to what the patients and doctors have to say? None of them consents to what he proposes.

Mr. Forsyth: May I say in the nicest way possible to the hon. Gentleman that had he listened to my answer, he would have heard me say that agreement was reached on 4 May. He asked who agreed to the proposals. The answer is the negotiators on behalf of the doctors who recommended the proposals to their members.

Sir Hector Monro: In view of the misinformation put out by the medical profession to patients and our constituents, will my hon. Friend publish a document showing the undoubted gains to patient care from the medical contract and the gains to the medical profession in financial resources?

Mr. Forsyth: I shall consider my hon. Friend's suggestion carefully. It is important that good information about the contract is available and he is right to point to one of the unfortunate aspects of the dialogue. There have been many misleading claims about the Government's proposals for the Health Service which have frightened people and caused needless anxiety, especially among the elderly. I welcome the fact that the British Medical Association has now acknowledged that its assertions about indicative budgets for drugs, for example, which it claimed would result in drugs not being available to patients, were not correct and that patients will be able to obtain the services that they require. The new contract will ensure that doctors who turn up in the middle of the night, who are available to their patients and who provide a broad range of services are properly rewarded, and that must be a great step forward.

Mr. Ernie Ross: If anyone is being misleading, it is the Minister, who has suggested that the contract was agreed by the doctors. The agreement was between the Minister and his officials, and the negotiators. The contract was rejected by the doctors and by the overwhelming majority of the patient population in Scotland. If the Minister has come here to mislead the House, he should try it on some other group, because we have discussed the Scottish

doctors' approach with them and they are 100 per cent. opposed to the contract. The Minister would do well to correct his statements to the House.

Mr. Forsyth: I certainly said nothing in any way misleading. I know that the hon. Gentleman, with his association with the trade union movement, will take a particular view of the difficulties that are caused when those negotiating on behalf of a group find the ground cut from under their feet because their members refuse to back a package freely negotiated between the parties.

Patients

5. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the percentage increase in out-patient attendance in day cases and in-patients treated in the Scottish Health Service since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Between March 1979 and March 1989 there was an increase of 608,717, or 11·7 per cent. in out-patient attendances, an increase of 95,699 or 119.2 per cent. in day cases and an increase of 144,531, or 19·6 per cent. in in-patient discharges.

Mr. Jack: May I, through my hon. Friend, congratulate those involved in the provisions of health care in Scotland on those remarkable figures? May I ask my hon. Friend—on the other side of the medical balance sheet—whether he is undertaking any programmes to improve health education and preventive measures in Scotland to help to contain the need for further resources?

Mr. Forsyth: I can reassure my hon. Friend. Our future priorities for the Health Service include an emphasis on preventive medicine and the new GPs' contract is intended to reward GPs who place more emphasis on preventive medicine. My hon. Friend is right to point out how remarkable those figures are. They show a Health Service that has never been better funded or treated more patients. That is the result of the Government's investment in the Health Service, which stands in stark contrast to the record of the previous Labour Government. In every year in which the Government have been in office, Health Service funding has increased. In recent times, only under the last Labour Government have cuts been made.

Dr. Godman: We have been discussing the proposed changes in the provision of health care. Is the Minister aware that each and every one of the consultants at Inverclyde royal hospital voted against that hospital's opting out? Will he assure me that that balance of view against will mark the end of his proposal for the opting out of that hospital?

Mr. Forsyth: I have no proposal for the opting out of any hospital. Self-governing hospitals will remain part of the National Health Service. Self-governing status will be available on a voluntary basis to hospitals that wish to benefit from it. I should have thought that consultants and other professionals—and, indeed, Members of Parliament—would wish to wait for a proposal and then examine that proposal carefully to see whether it was in the interests of patients and the community as a whole. That is the basis on which proposals for self-governing status will be evaluated in future. It will be entirely a matter for the hospitals, including Inverclyde royal hospital, to decide whether they will benefit from decisions being taken at local level rather than above their heads at health board level or by my Department.

Migration

6. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people migrated from Scotland *(a)* to England, *(b)* to other parts of the United Kingdom and *(c)* to other parts of the world in the past 20 years; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): Over the last 20 years, estimated net migration from Scotland has totalled 146,000 to the rest of the United Kingdom and 181,000 to other parts of the world.

Mr. Greenway: Can my hon. Friend confirm that those figures show that far fewer Scots are emigrating under this Conservative Government than under previous Labour Governments—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Greenway: —presumably because the Scottish economy is now stronger than it has ever been? Will my hon. Friend explain the Scottish saying that when a Scot emigrates to another land, both countries benefit?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend puts his point well. I believe that it was an Englishman who said that for centuries Scots have travelled the world keeping the Sabbath and everything else that they could lay their hands on. Scotland has benefited from the fact that many Scots have found themselves important positions south of the border, for example as chairmen of companies such as ICI and Shell. The Cabinet benefits from the presence of a Scottish Lord Chancellor and a Scottish Minister responsible for information. I am sure that Scotland and the United Kingdom are the better for their presence.

Mr. Canavan: Do the migration statistics include the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) whose reported advice to Scottish Tory Members is, "If you're looking to the future lads, you'd better follow my example and migrate to a safe Tory seat in the deep south"?

Mr. Lang: Southend, East has never been better represented than it is now and Scotland still benefits from the knowledge and experience of my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor).

Mr. Andy Stewart: Historically Scots have always left home to conquer, and most succeed—for example, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and former Chief Secretary to the Treasury. On the other hand there is a very tiny minority who do not succeed. A constituent of mine who found the going tough, went back home to Scotland and he is now the hon. Member for Clydesdale (Mr. Hood). Does my hon. Friend agree that if Socialism spreads south of the border, we will witness emigration on a scale seen in East Germany today?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Under Labour Governments in the 1960s and 1970s overseas emigration reached about 150,000. In the past five years overseas emigration has been running at about one third of that level. Clearly, fleeing from Socialism occurred under Labour Governments before, just as it is happening now in eastern Europe.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: Does the Minister accept that the harsh reality is that the population of Scotland is falling and that our brightest and best continue to leave? Even in an area like my constituency where the population is growing, matters are not helped by companies like BP which promise to bring jobs to Scotland and then make 900 people redundant.

Mr. Lang: The hon. Gentleman is wrong about BP. It employs more people in Scotland now than at the time of the Britoil takeover. The hon. Gentleman may also like to know that all the regions of Scotland with the exception of Strathclyde and, to a very small degree, Lothian and Tayside, have had population gains. With regard to emigration within the United Kingdom, the recent figures suggest that there is at present a flow back to Scotland.

Council House Sales

7. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many council houses have been sold to sitting tenants in Scotland since May 1979.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): Since April 1979, nearly 164,000 public sector houses in Scotland have been sold to sitting tenants. Included in that figure are over 117,000 sales by local authorities.

Mr. Knox: Can my hon. Friend say what percentage of the council house stock in Scotland has been sold to sitting tenants and how that compares with the percentage in England? If the former is still lower than the latter, what is my hon. Friend doing to increase sales in Scotland?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: First, I can say that the figure is 16·5 per cent. in Scotland and 21·2 per cent. in England. Since my hon. Friend last asked this question, the gap has been closed by 0·1 per cent. I am sure that that percentage will increase. It is very important that public sector sales released more than £1,600 million for other public sector housing in Scotland.

Mr. Ron Brown: Is it not immoral for construction companies in Edinburgh to try to bribe councillor Tom Darby when that councillor has proved his innocence? Is it not wrong that the hon. Gentleman's Government should bribe Barratts to the tune of over £300,000 to develop a site at west Pilton in my constituency? That sum of money has been kept secret—the Government will not divulge it, but we know it. Why do the Government reek of double standards? The Minister should explain that because many people want an answer.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I think that the hon. Gentleman is trying to ask whether the SDA has made a grant for building renovation in his constituency. I strongly support the SDA's efforts to bring about urban renewal in Scotland, because they have benefited not only the hon. Gentleman's constituents but my own.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: Does the Minister agree that council house purchases can turn into a financial nightmare because of the Government's policy of high mortgage interest rates and because some house construction is fundamentally flawed, such as occurred with the Whitson-Fairhurst houses, even when bought in good faith? The Minister is aware of my constituents who are caught in a financial no-man's-land between Dundee district council and the Government who are unwilling to rectify past mistakes. When will the Minister sort out that matter?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: A number of houses have been designated as defective. When people bought public sector houses without the knowledge that they were defective, the Government were duty-bound to be of assistance. The hon. Gentleman's constituents are in a different category, but I will look into the specific case that he mentioned.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Does my hon. Friend the Minister condemn the disgraceful action by Glasgow district council in attempting to deny tenants their statutory rights to buy? Is that not a frightening omen of what might happen under a Labour Government?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes. I agree entirely with my hon. Friend. More than 14,000 tenants have been encouraged to sign forms stating that they will not exercise the right to buy unless they drop the discount if their houses are improved. The case against the district council has been won, and there the matter rests.

Elderly People (NHS Services)

8. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will allocate to health boards, the resources required to ensure that services for the elderly can be provided entirely within the National Health Service.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. The effect of such a proposal would be to end the very valuable role played by voluntary agencies, such as Age Concern Scotland and Scottish Action on Dementia, in the provision of services to the elderly.

Mr. McAvoy: Does the Minister recall his answer at the last Scottish Question Time, when he said that the Glasgow health board had sufficient capital? How does he square that with the health board's statement that its lack of capital forced it not to build a geriatric hospital at Rutherglen? Does he concede that his policy of starving health boards of capital is tantamount to blackmail and forces boards throughout Scotland to bring in private companies which are interested only in profit and not the care of the elderly?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman must be aware that we have a record level of capital spending in the Health Service in Scotland. This year it was £148 million. When the hon. Gentleman's Government were in office, they cut the capital building programme. The Greater Glasgow health board is inviting private sector companies to build facilities for the elderly, one of them in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, which will provide unrivalled standards of care for the elderly. As a result, the board will be able to use its capital budget to carry out further improvements in the Health Service. It recently announced its proposals for consultation, which offer Glasgow the prospect of hospitals that are able to provide the standards of the next century. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would welcome that. He has often asked for provision to be made for the elderly in his constituency. That provision is now being made. He should look at the

example of Takare—there are examples in England—and see for himself the standards of service which are being provided.

Mr. Rathbone: I understand my hon. Friend's answer about the elderly, but will he ensure that sufficient services are provided for the treatment of drug misusers so that they can all be treated within the National Health Service?

Mr. Forsyth: I can certainly reassure my hon. Friend. I am a member of the joint ministerial group that co-ordinates activities in this matter. We have substantially increased expenditure on services for drug abusers and that is very much connected with the fight against the AIDS problem in Scotland, for which we have doubled resources in the past year.

Mr. Dewar: If the Minister answers his case for short-term savings on the capital budget by using firms such as Takare, does he not run the risk of significant increases in revenue expenditure in the longer term, and has that been assessed? Does the Minister accept that there is justified anxiety about geriatric care becoming a profit opportunity in the private sector? In case the Minister gives the stock answer and accuses me of merely reflecting the views of the board's employees—the auxiliaries, nurses and doctors—will he test the opinion of patients, and if appropriate, their families on this issue and the proposal that firms such as Takare should be introduced in a way that will be seen as a move towards privatisation? Will he take account of the trenchant advice offered by his special campaign adviser in Scotland, the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), who told the press recently that the White Paper on the Health Service was doing a great deal of damage and, unless major concessions were given, should be abandoned?

Mr. Forsyth: I think that the hon. Gentleman is aware that his account of what my hon. Friend said is not an accurate reflection of what he actually said—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Forsyth: In respect of the substance of his question, the hon. Gentleman will also know that the Takare proposals provide an opportunity for elderly people, who are perhaps currently using hospital accommodation which is expensive and not suited to their needs, to be looked after in purpose-built facilities of the highest standard. That will result in a revenue saving for the Greater Glasgow health board. There are many examples of elderly people being kept in acute hospitals—where they block beds—at great expense in conditions such as we do not want to see in the Health Service. The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) might like to join me in visiting the Takare facilities in the south and judging for himself the standard of care provided.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: May I draw to my hon. Friend's attention the view of many of us that the great unhappiness and distress caused to the elderly and disabled community is due to the shameful misinterpretation of our Health Service proposals? The Minister should concentrate on getting across the facts contained in the proposals. Would he appeal to the Labour party, irrespective of its views on political issues, not to use propaganda to cause misery and unhappiness to sick people?

Mr. Forsyth: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for explaining the position and I agree that the Health Service and health care in our country is so important that it should not be the political football which the Labour party has made it. It is because the Labour party has no positive proposals for the improvement of the Health Service in this country that it has had to resort to misrepresenting our proposals in the way outlined by my hon. Friend.

Mr. Kirkwood: Does the Minister agree that one of the best ways of delivering care to the elderly in future will be by developing a proper system of community care? Does he agree that it is absolutely scandalous that his English counterpart, the Secretary of State for Health, is publishing the White Paper about community care in England tomorrow when no hon. Member will be able to cross-examine him? What steps is he taking to make available to the House his views about the future of community care in Scotland and what resources is he prepared to put behind the provision of those services?

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman will know that we have placed considerable emphasis on community care. He will see from the SHARPEN proposals, which were published some time ago, the priority which we give to care for the elderly. The White Paper will be published following a consultation period after our response to the Griffiths report. We certainly intend to take a flexible approach, and it is important that resources are transferred to local authorities to ensure that they play the key role—which they will have in the future—in ensuring proper care in the community.

Defence Industry Employees

9. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of employees employed in the defence industry or defence-related industries in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The Ministry of Defence estimates that in 1986-87, the latest period for which estimates are available, some 17,000 people in Scotland were directly employed with contractors supplying equipment to the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Brazier: Can my hon. Friend confirm that the high level of involvement that he has mentioned, together with the disproportionately high contribution that Scottish people have made to the armed forces over the generations, confirms the strong commitment of Scottish people towards the defence of these islands and belies the pacifist attitude of many Opposition Members?

Mr. Lang: I am happy to confirm that. Indeed, 10 per cent. of United Kingdom defence industry employment is to be found in Scotland, which is higher than our share of the population. Scotland has always made a major contribution to the defence of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Dunnachie: Does the Minister know that the engineering plant at Shank and Barchead has been threatened with closure and that that closure poses a threat to the defence of the British nation because it is the only engineering plant in Britain that produces a specialist valve for the Royal Navy? Will the Minister use his good offices to ensure that the closure does not take place, thus safeguarding the nation?

Mr. Lang: Commercial decisions of that sort are essentially for the management of the company, but I feel sure that if the valve is as special as the hon. Gentleman has suggested, a way will be found to ensure that it continues to be available to the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Steel: Will the Minister have a word with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and ensure that an early and favourable decision is made about the award of the radar system for the European fighter aircraft to Ferranti Systems in Edinburgh?

Mr. Lang: The right hon. Gentleman will know that that is not exclusively a matter for the United Kingdom Government; it requires agreement among the partners in the EFA project. Certainly Ferranti remains in contention, but the matter has yet to be decided.

Scottish Police Federation

10. **Mr. Shersby:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the Scottish Police Federation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the then chairman at the federation's annual conference in April 1988.

Mr. Shersby: When my hon. Friend next meets the chairman, will he assure him that the negotiations that are currently taking place in the police arbitration tribunal will be completed before there is any question of reaching a decision or issuing draft regulations on rent allowances?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We shall certainly go ahead with the negotiations as quickly as possible. An important point for my hon. Friend and for the police officers concerned is that the level of rent allowances for the police will be restored to them and backdated by regulations from 1 April this year. Those regulations will be brought forward as quickly as possible which, I believe, is exactly what the police want.

Mr. Home Robertson: Will the Minister also discuss the case for a fair comparison of the remunerations of all the emergency services, including the ambulance service?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have no responsibility for the ambulance service, but I have the utmost admiration for the emergency services with which I have had to work.

Sir Hector Monro: Will my hon. Friend take the opportunity when he next meets the chairman of congratulating the chief constable of Dumfries and Galloway and all his police officers, and other Scottish police officers, on their outstanding work in the Lockerbie air disaster investigation? Will he associate himself with the remarks of the Lord Advocate that media speculation is singularly unhelpful in concluding an investigation and does nothing to alleviate the feelings of relatives?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes, I agree entirely with my hon. Friend on both counts. The police have been extremely painstaking in the investigation and nothing should be said or done to impede that in any respect.

Ferranti

11. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has had any discussion with Ferranti's Scottish group about the necessary financial reconstruction of the company following the acquisition of ISL in the United States of America and its implications for the future of the Scottish economy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: Scottish Office officials are keeping in close touch with senior company management and with other interested Government Departments, and are keeping me very much informed about developments. The Government share the general concern about the future of operations in Scotland and elsewhere, and are taking a great interest in the company's efforts to resolve its present difficulties.

Mr. Strang: Is the Secretary of State aware that the more we learn about the prospective partners or purchasers to whom the Ferranti board is talking, the more worried we become about the thousands of Ferranti jobs in Scotland? Is acquisition by a company such as Singapore Technology seriously being considered? Does the Secretary of State accept that direct equity participation by Thomson CSF could be especially damaging to the highly successful Edinburgh-based operation? Finally, will the Secretary of State make it clear in Cabinet that the final financial settlement must be one that will allow Ferranti to make its substantial contribution to the Scottish economy?

Mr. Rifkind: As the hon. Gentleman knows, a significant number of companies have expressed an interest in a relationship with Ferranti, but it is primarily a matter for the company itself which, of course, is a private sector company. The extent to which there may be a Government interest either in the defence implications or the competition implications of any proposal will fall to be considered only when a particular proposal is put forward for either a merger or an acquisition of Ferranti.

Mr. Darling: Is the Secretary of State aware that a growing number of people in Edinburgh are getting the distinct impression that the Scottish Office is acting like a disinterested spectator of Ferranti's future? Is he aware that the company's future, in defence and as a major component of the electronics industry, is too important to leave to the vagaries of the market place? Should not the Secretary of State and his colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry take an active interest in the future of the company and start fighting to get the radar contract? Otherwise we will lose a major chunk of our electronics industry in Edinburgh and in Scotland. Is it not time that the Secretary of State did something about that?

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman really had the interests of the company at heart, he would know that little can do more damage to the interests of the company and to confidence in it than the belief that the Government have had to intervene or should intervene to resolve matters. The company has made it clear that it is not seeking intervention from the Government and it believes that it must be permitted to determine its own future within the normal constraints. If the hon. Gentleman does not believe that, it shows how out of touch he is with the industrial world in which we live.

Mr. Hayward: Does my right hon. and learned Friend find it amazing that Opposition Members stand up and plead on behalf of factories in their constituencies, when the Labour party has voted for a reduction in defence expenditure of as much as one third which would put at risk 7,000 jobs in Scotland alone?

Mr. Rifkind: Those who work in defence industries in Scotland, or in the United Kingdom as a whole, have never been in any doubt about the disastrous implications for their employment of the Labour party coming to office with its old policies, its new policies or any future shred of policy it may care to put before them.

Local Government Finance

12. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the consequences for local authority manpower and expenditure of the recently announced changes in poll tax payments and exemptions.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The manpower and expenditure consequences of all but one of the amendments to the community charge legislation included in the Local Government and Housing Bill are expected to be minor. The one exception is the transitional relief scheme. The Government have already undertaken to reimburse reasonable administrative costs incurred by local authorities.

Mr. Douglas: Does the Minister have the figures which would show the massive increase in the cost of collecting the poll tax, compared with the rating system, and the massive increase in personnel involved? Will he take time to read yesterday's excellent editorial in *The Scotsman*, which said that no matter what the Government try to do with the tax, it is becoming a shambles and ought to be completely removed from the statute book?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Of course the collection of the community charge will be more expensive because it applies to more people. Before the hon. Member criticises that form of taxation he should remember what his own environment spokesman had to say. He said:

"The two tax idea had a great deal of merit but when it was approved by the Home Policy Committee I took a lead in expressing concern about the difficulty of selling two taxes".

The hon. Member should also make representations to his own Front Bench.

Sir Nicholas Fairbairn: Does my hon. Friend think that if the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) is worried about an increase in expenditure on the collection of the tax falling on those who have to pay it, he should obey the law and pay his own?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes, I would say to my hon. and learned Friend that those who refuse to pay community charge when they are well able to do so are sponging of the rest of the community.

Mr. Maxton: Is the Minister yet able to tell us what the recalculated allocation to Glasgow district council will be? Does it not illustrate the obscurity of the poll tax system that on 1 April there will be a massive increase in the poll tax for my deprived constituency in Castlemilk, while the wealthy citizens of Eastwood, Bearsden and Milngavie may have a cut in their poll tax? Is it not quite absurd, in the year when Glasgow is the city of culture, representing the United Kingdom throughout the world, that the Secretary of State is cutting the amount of money which he will give it?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am glad to say that this is being sorted out as a matter of urgency. The revised distribution proposals will be issued to COSLA and to local authorities within the next few days. I must make it clear that the figures issued in the statement earlier this week were provisional and that the grant is not payable until next April. Therefore, things will be sorted out quickly.

A9

13. **Sir Russell Johnston:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what improvements he proposes for the A9 between Perth and Inverness.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The A9 has been fully reconstructed between Perth and Inverness to the great benefit of the economy of Inverness and the surrounding areas. I hope to make a statement on an agreed package of further improvements in the near future.

Sir Russell Johnston: Is the Minister aware that the recent spate of accidents on the A9 has caused a great deal of concern? Part of the cause of those accidents must be the road's design—alternate dual and single carriageway, long slow curves where overtaking is difficult and many crossing points. I look forward to hearing the statement that the Minister has promised us.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We have consulted the hon. Gentleman's chief constable and his regional council and we shall introduce a package of accident remedial measures that could involve signposting, markings on the road and improving its surface in various parts. In the past few weeks I have travelled up and down the A9 to his constituency and, overall, it is an extremely good road. Certain parts of it, however, need urgent attention and that will be put in hand.

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: I have a short statement to make about the operation of the 4 o'clock shuffle, which determines the order of oral questions due for answer two weeks ahead.

With effect from the start of next Session the shuffle will be done by computer, instead of manually as at present. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] Order. I have inspected the new system and I am fully satisfied that it is more efficient than the present arrangements, and, more importantly, equally fair.

If any hon. Member wishes to see the new system in operation, the Table Office will be glad to arrange this.

Autumn Statement

3.31 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. John Major): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

Cabinet agreed the Government's expenditure plans this morning. I am now able to inform the House of the public expenditure outturn for this year; the plans for the next three years; proposals for national insurance contributions in 1990-91; and the forecast of economic prospects for 1990 required by the Industry Act 1975.

The main public expenditure figures, together with the full text of the economic forecast, will be available from the Vote Office as soon as I sit down. The printed Autumn Statement will be published next Wednesday.

Tight control of public expenditure remains a central element of the Government's economic strategy. In the past seven years this has led to a sharp fall in the ratio of public spending, excluding privatisation proceeds, to national income. This fall has made it possible to improve dramatically the Government's finances while still making substantial reductions in tax rates. The ratio of public spending to gross domestic product was nearly 47 per cent. in 1982-83. In the current year, it is likely to be 38·75 per cent., significantly below the level expected at the time of the last Autumn Statement. For the next two years the plans I am announcing today show ratios of 39 and 38·75 per cent. Those are unchanged from the ratios published in last year's Autumn Statement, and permit a cash increase in general Government expenditure in 1990-91 of around £5·5 billion. By 1992-93 the ratio is expected to fall further to its lowest level since the mid-1960s.

For the current year, the outturn of expenditure is expected to be about £168 billion—£1 billion higher than the original planning total. This partly reflects a lower level of privatisation proceeds, but its principal cause is massive overspending by local authorities on both current and capital account. As the House knows, new arrangements for the finance and control of local authority expenditure in England and Wales are being introduced on 1 April 1990. This year's outturn shows how necessary those new measures are. Central Government spending remains firmly under control.

The plans for the next three years have been set on the new definition of the planning total which the Government announced in July last year and which was welcomed by the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee. This includes central Government support for local authorities, but excludes their self-financed expenditure. The composition of general Government expenditure remains unchanged.

For 1990-91, the new planning total has been set at £179 billion and, in the following two years, at £192 billion and £203 billion respectively. Within that, the estimates of privatisation proceeds are unchanged, at £5 billion a year. There are also substantial reserves, rising from £3 billion in 1990-91 to £6 billion and £9 billion in the following two years.

The new plans also show continued real growth in spending on the Government's priorities. Thus, between this year and next, spending on the National Health Service in the United Kingdom will rise by £2,400 million. Taking account of income generation and cost savings, that is equivalent to a £2,600 million increase in resources, or 5·5 per cent. in real terms. These plans will finance the improvements in the management of the service outlined in the National Health Service review. They provide more than £200 million extra for hospital building and other capital expenditure next year; and they will finance continuing growth in services for patients. They are the clearest possible evidence of the Government's practical commitment to improving the care available in the National Health Service.

There will be substantial increases also for investment in transport. Spending on national roads is planned to double between 1988-89 and 1992-93. Extra financing of £400 million to £500 million a year is being made available for the railways and London Regional Transport, including upgrading the services on Network SouthEast and the London Underground, to relieve congestion and improve safety, and for rail services for the Channel tunnel. In total we have added £1·8 billion to the planned spending on transport in the next two years.

The plans provide an extra £250 million over the next two years for a new initiative to tackle homelessness, to be announced today by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. Central Government support for the provision of new homes by housing associations will more than double from £800 million in 1989-90 to £1,700 million in 1992-93.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security has already announced real increases in benefits which will help 1·5 million families and 500,000 long-term sick and disabled people.

There will be a further increase of over £500 million in the total resources available for higher education in 1990-91 compared with this year. It will provide for the continuing growth in the number of students, which has risen by 30 per cent. since 1979, and is now at a record level and it will cover the cost of the Government's proposals on top-up loans. There is provision for more environmental research, including the new climate change centre and the doubling of our contribution to the United Nations environmental programme.

About £1·5 billion has been added to planned capital spending by central Government and public corporations in 1990-91. That represents a real increase of around 10 per cent. compared with 1989-90.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I have been a Member for a long time, but I wish to know whether I am allowed to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer a question. He is making a long statement. Am I allowed to ask a question and, if not, when can I ask him a question?

Mr. Speaker: Surely the hon. Member does not need to pose that question. If I call him later, he can ask the Chancellor a question then.

Mr. Major: The new plans include the money central Government provide to support local authority spending. The Government's proposals for aggregate external finance in 1990-91 were announced to the House in July. Measures have also been announced which will ease the transition from rates to community charge. The cost to the taxpayer of these measures will be nearly £700 million in 1990-91, with further substantial sums in each of the following two years.

Capital grants and credit approvals will provide central Government support for local authority capital expenditure under the new arrangements. The new plans provide support for a sustained programme of school and college building and modernisation, for local authorities to contribute to the homelessness package, for transport projects, as well as capital spending on other local services, including local roads and environmental improvement.

As in the past, these improvements have been possible only through a rigorous selection of priorities, substantial gains in value for money, and a very welcome reduction in the burden of debt interest. They have been found within an affordable level of total public spending. Overall public spending excluding privatisation proceeds is expected to grow on average by 1·75 per cent. a year in real terms throughout the period between 1988-89 and 1992-93. This was the rate of growth projected in last year's Autumn Statement and we have stuck to it. Over the 1970s, a decade of high borrowing and high inflation, as well as high public spending, it grew not by 1·75 per cent. a year but by 3 per cent. a year.

The Government's new plans demonstrate their continuing commitment to two vital principles: first, to maintain firm control over total spending; and secondly, to increase efficiency in order to provide more resources where they are most needed. I should like to congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary on his skilful and successful conduct of the public spending round.

I turn next to national insurance contributions. As the House knows, we have now implemented the reform of employee contributions announced by my right hon. Friend the member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson) in the Budget. From last month, two of the three step increases in contribution rates have been abolished. This means that employees who get pay increases taking them just above these steps can no longer lose more in higher contributions than they gain in extra pay. And the initial step at earnings of £43 a week, where people first enter the contribution system, has been more than halved. These measures have reduced contributions by up to £3 a week for nearly 19 million employees and are of particular help to many employees on modest incomes; they have also removed some important disincentives.

The usual autumn review of contributions has been conducted in the light of advice from the Government Actuary on the prospective income and expenditure of the national insurance fund, and taking account of the statement on benefits made in October by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security.

Next year, the initial class 1 contribution rate payable on earnings up to the lower earnings limit will remain at only 2 per cent. This means that a payment of only 92p a week will buy entitlement to the basic pension and other contributory benefits for those who earn just enough to pay contributions. On additional earnings, up to the upper earnings limit, the rate will remain unchanged at 9 per cent. For employers, the main rate will also be unchanged at 10·45 per cent.

The lower earnings limit will be increased to £46 a week, in line with the single person's pension, and the upper earnings limit will be raised to £350 a week. For employers, the upper limits for the three reduced bands will be increased broadly in line with prices.

I am also publishing today the economic forecast required by the Industry Act 1975.

It is clear beyond doubt that the economy has greatly strengthened over the last decade. We have experienced eight years of strong and sustained growth with inflation at moderate levels. This has brought an increase in employment of about 2·75 million since March 1983 and a sustained rise in living standards.

However, it is also clear that in the last two years, 1987 and 1988, demand, and with it output, rose at a rate which exceeded expectations and could not be sustained. That became apparent in increased inflationary pressures and the growth of the current account deficit.

These pressures had to be reduced and monetary policy was tightened accordingly. The effects of this tightening are already apparent in recent retail sales figures, and the turnaround in the housing market.

The Government's fiscal position is also very strong. I now expect this year's fiscal surplus to be about £12·5 billion, equivalent to 2·5 per cent. of GDP. That represents a very tight fiscal stance by any standards.

Both tax yield and expenditure are higher than forecast at Budget time, but lower proceeds from privatisation and the very high take-up of personal pensions mean that the public sector debt repayment will be slightly below the Budget projections.

Looking at the wider economy, as always, a great deal inevitably depends on the actions of companies and individuals. So there is bound to be uncertainty about the speed with which the economy will adjust to the present tight stance of policy. Our forecast is that growth in domestic demand will be a little over 3·5 per cent. in the current year—a sharp, but inevitable, slowdown from over 7 per cent. recorded in 1988.

Non-oil GDP is expected to grow by 3 per cent. this year. GDP growth as a whole for the current year looks like turning out at 2 per cent., a little below the forecast published at Budget time. This results from lower than expected North sea oil production, which is taking longer than expected to recover from the several serious accidents of the past two years.

Business investment is likely to increase by 9·25 per cent. this year, giving a total of over 40 per cent. in the three years to 1989. This is the largest-ever rise in business investment over a three-year period and is two and a half times as fast as the growth of personal consumption over the same period. This has inevitably contributed to strong import growth and a higher current account deficit in the short run. Notwithstanding this unwelcome effect, the resulting increase in productive capacity will help to sustain the growth of output and in due course bring the deficit down.

Looking ahead to 1990, our tight fiscal and monetary policy will have an increasing impact both on household spending and on company spending, which typically reacts later than the personal sector. Investment should continue to grow, but it will do so more slowly.

The slowdown in the economy means that GDP is forecast to increase by only 1·25 per cent. in 1990. This will bring the average growth in the four years to 1990 to 3 per cent. a year.

As domestic demand slows, import growth should moderate. At the same time, the strong rise in exports, which has been one of the most welcome developments in 1989, is forecast to continue. Non-oil visible exports are expected to rise by over 11 per cent. this year, the highest rate since 1973, and we expect a further substantial

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increase next year. As a result, we now forecast that the current account deficit will fall from some £20 billion in the current year to about £15 billion in 1990

We will also see a further reduction in inflation. The headline measure of retail price inflation has already peaked at over 8 per cent. in May and June this year, and has since come down a little. Following the recent rise in mortgage rates, it will remain high for some months, but our forecast is for it to fall to 5·75 per cent. by the fourth quarter of 1990, and I expect to see it fall still further after that.

Our main priority must be to bring inflation decisively down, and keep it down. To achieve this, the economy must slow down for a while. This does mean that 1990 may not be an easy year, but the economy enters the 1990s in incomparably better shape than it entered the 1980s. The supply side reforms of the last decade have left business and industry better able to handle both the short-term difficulties before us and the longer-term opportunities to come. I have no doubt that we must stick to the policies that have turned the economy around, and that we are determined to do.

Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark (Birmingham, Selly Oak): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It directly involves the statement.

Mr. Speaker: If it directly involves the statement, it cannot be a matter for me.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: No. I will not hear the hon. Gentleman now.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: Sit down, please. The hon. Gentleman must contain himself. He knows perfectly well——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark *rose——*

Mr. Speaker: No. Sit down, please. If the hon. Gentleman catches my eye, he will be able to ask a question on the statement.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: When will you hear it?

Mr. Speaker: When question time arises after the Front Bench spokesmen.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: It is about this matter.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will not hear it now.

Mr. John Smith (Monklands, East): As the Chancellor of the Exchequer recognised in his concluding remarks, this is the last formal economic statement to the House in the 1980s—the decade of Conservative Government. Is not the bogus economic miracle that has been boasted about on so many previous occasions revealed as a hollow sham by the admission that the Chancellor was forced to make that in 1989 we have, at £20 billion, the largest balance of payments deficit in British economic history?

The steady deterioration in Britain's balance of trade has been matched by appalling Government complacency, perhaps best exemplified by the Prime Minister, who said of the first month in which a deficit of over £1 billion was announced—January 1988:

"we believe that last month's trade figures were a freak."—[*Official Report*, 8 March 1988; Vol. 129, c. 184.]

The average for every single month has been substantially over £1 billion—£1·3 billion to be precise. So does a freak become the norm, just as, I suppose, a blip in inflation keeps blipping relentlessly on? With that appalling record in mind, let us examine what we were told in the Autumn Statement of November 1988. The balance of payments forecast was £14·5 billion. Sadly the outcome today is much worse, although the Chancellor had the sauce to present it as if it were a fall.

To arrive at the erroneous prediction, the Government had to argue that the growth in exports would substantially exceed the growth in imports—once again they were wrong. Imports have increased by 9·25 per cent., not 4·5 per cent. as forecast. Far from falling behind exports, imports are, sadly, continuing to race ahead. The theory was that, as interest rates bit into domestic demand, industry would effortlessly switch to export markets and thereby output and investment would not decline. Clearly, that has not happened. Our trading performance has continued to deteriorate. In the last quarter for which we have figures—quarter three of this year—we are further into the red than ever before.

No one doubts that high interest rates are hurting, but clearly they are not working. Was that not the message of the Confederation of British Industry's latest industrial trends survey which warned that nearly one manufacturer in three is expecting to reduce investment in plant and machinery in the next 12 months? It said that the level of orders and the growth in exports have begun to decline and the growth in output has come to a standstill. Is that not the non-complacement and accurate autumn statement on British business?

Is it not abundantly clear that the balance of payments deficit is Britain's gravest economic problem? Why is that not recognised by the Government? Why can they not, even now, comprehend that our deficit is not some temporary mismatch of supply and demand, which matters little if it can be readily financed? Is not the truth that there is a fundamental structural weakness in British industry which has worsened sharply in the decade during which the Government have turned their back on it? Just as investment in manufacturing industry—which is different from business investment, the only investment figure that the Government quote—is clambering back to just a few points above 1979 levels, up go interest rates to slam the process into reverse. Are we not back to the familiar characteristics of Tory economic mismanagement: stop, go and stop again?

Does the Chancellor appreciate that in figures released this very day manufacturing output in 1989 has not increased at all, although the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development expects world trade in manufactured goods to rise by 8 per cent. this year? The House and, no doubt, the Select Committee will look with care at the public expenditure figures that the Chancellor announced. They are detailed in the tables that accompany the Autumn Statement. However, I draw attention to what I believe to be a crucial fact about public expenditure.

The real estimate of general Government expenditure in 1989-90—table A1—is calculated at £187·4 billion. According to the Government's own table, that is only £1·7 billion up on the previous year. That is an increase of less than 1 per cent.—lower than in 1985, 1986 and 1987. No amount of guileful presentation can hide that fact.

General Government expenditure has effectively been at a standstill in real terms during the last five years. No wonder that our public services, right across the range, are hardly being sustained, let alone achieving improved standards. No wonder that there is massive scepticism—*[Interruption.]* I shall deal with hospitals in a moment. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask hon. Members not to shout from a sedentary position. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was heard in silence. I ask the House also to listen in silence to the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith).

Mr. Smith: I do not doubt that the reiteration of these facts causes pain to Conservative Members. They must console themselves with the thought that it is the price of being Conservatives in modern Britain. It is when we know the truth about the present and the past that we are sceptical about the future.

I turn to the National Health Service, about which claims are made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He says that there is to be an increase in resources amounting to £2·6 billion—£2·4 billion, plus cost savings of £200 million. Is it not correct that, of this amount, £1·2 billion will be accounted for by the general Government deflator, that £500 million will be accounted for by the additional National Health Service deflator, that £200 million is accounted for by supposed savings, not yet achieved, that £250 million is the cost of the National Health Service review and that about £500 million may be available for increased patient care? I should like the Chancellor to go through each of those points and tell me whether they are correct. People are familiar with claims being made about additional resources having been made available to the National Health Service, although it seems to them to be declining every time they need to make use of it.

I should also like to ask the Chancellor about his homelessness package of £250 million to be spent over two years. Is it not correct that that is likely to provide about 5,000, or perhaps at a stretch 10,000, new homes? Is that an adequate response when we know that there are 100,000 extra homeless persons each year—that is, people accepted on to local authority housing lists?

On education, may we have an assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that education expenditure this year will be sufficient for him to come to the House next year and say that no children are being sent home from school because there are no teachers to teach them?

The Autumn Statement shows that, compared with last year's forecast, output is down, the balance of payments is worse and inflation is up. What is worse, for the year to come, output will fall from 2 per cent. to a meagre 1·4 per cent.—one of the lowest predicted rates since the last recession and in marked contrast to our competitors. But, in spite of the slowdown, according to the Government's predictions, the balance of payments deficit will remain in double figures—still the worst performance among the major industrial countries—and inflation will remain high, well above the level in other major industrial countries. The price may well be paid by those who become unemployed as a result.

I fear that this is yet another revelation of the extent to which our economy is being mismanaged, whoever is the nominal Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman is seeking to ask a question——

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: I am raising a point of order. Until you have heard it, Sir, how can you rule me out of order?

Mr. Speaker: When an hon. Gentleman raises a point of order, he should not say he wants to ask a question about the statement. By definition, that is patently not a matter of order. I shall take the hon. Gentleman's point of order.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: We are all meant to be hon. Members of the House; some are more honourable than others. On such an important statement, Front-Bench spokesmen have the statement an hour before, and other hon. Members have it a quarter of an hour before. As we are all elected Members, on such a statement why should some of us be trusted and some not? Why cannot we all have the statement at the same time? Why are they to be trusted more than us?

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman feels that he is in the latter category. It has always been a convention that Front-Bench spokesmen have received the statement in advance and Back Benchers do not have that privilege. I wish that they did.

Mr. Major: The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) raised a whole series of points and I shall deal with them. I must say that he has a considerable capacity for gloom, and I really wish that he would not paint down the performance of British industry. In his gloomy package in which he sought to paint down British interests, he overlooked entirely that growth is continuing, investment is continuing, inflation is falling and the trade gap is narrowing. Apparently all those points escaped the right hon. and learned Gentleman.

In regard to the detailed points that he raised about whether or not there is a standstill in public services, I draw his attention to the increase in capital expenditure on public services of £1·5 billion next year on roads, housing, education, health, rail and the urban development corporations. I remind him that, under the last Labour Government, capital spending fell and it has risen very dramatically under this Government.

In regard to the National Health Service, of course the factors that the right hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned are incorporated in any increase in public expenditure, notwithstanding that there is an increase in real terms of 5·5 per cent. The right hon. and learned Gentleman cannot stomach the fact that on revenue and capital year after year we increase the resources available to the National Health Service.

Next year, there should be a substantial correction to the balance of payments of over 1·25 per cent. of GDP, which is one of the largest corrections ever. I should have thought that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East would have welcomed that.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman was wrong about exports, which are continuing to grow. Our forecast is that exports and manufacturing output will continue to grow next year.

Interest rates, contrary to the right hon. and learned Gentleman's suggestion, are working. There has been a slowing down in activity, which is necessary to bring down

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inflation. Monetary policy is playing a key role in that slowing down, and will continue to do so in the forthcoming months.

Manufacturing investment has been speeding ahead successfully. It rose by nearly 11 per cent. in 1988, and, although final figures for 1989 are not available, yet again it showed considerable and strong growth.

We expect the homelessness package to provide at least 15,000 new lettings. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will give full details of the package later this afternoon.

As I said earlier, there will be a substantial real increase in resources for higher education, which will assist the education process all the way down.

Mr. Terence L. Higgins (Worthing): Does my right hon. Friend agree that in any Autumn Statement it is important to combine prudence with the right sense of priorities? Is he aware that it is important that he has achieved the same ratio of public expenditure to national income as was predicted last year for the period that we are about to enter? Does he accept that increased expenditure on the National Health Service is much to be welcomed? Does he agree that he has selected the right combination to manage the economy since a tough monetary policy is being backed up by a massive surplus and a tight fiscal policy?

Mr. Major: I entirely agree with my right hon. Friend. If one is to maintain a prudent budget, the importance of declining public expenditure as a share of national income is self-evident. In this year's public spending round, we have sustained precisely the ratios forecast in last year's Autumn Statement. For the new year three of the forecast, the ratio will fall yet again. We have certainly met my right hon. Friend's strictures on that point. In my judgment, the majority of people in Britain and in the National Health Service will give the increases a warmer welcome than the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East. My right hon. Friend was entirely right to draw attention to the twin capacity of monetary policy and fiscal policy to bear down on inflation. I give him a clear undertaking that we shall continue to use both.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Does the Chancellor recognise that his attempts to pull rabbits out of hats will not fool those who must consider the figures in detail or those who must use them to try to hold together declining public services? Does he recall last year's promised increase of 4·5 per cent. for the Health Service, which turned out to be 1·5 per cent. and was insufficient to cover extra inflation in the Health Service or the range of demands on it?

Does the Chancellor accept that the figures that he quoted for transport will not build the two lines through central London for which the previous Secretary of State for Transport argued and will not fund the high-speed rail links that the north and Scotland need to the Channel tunnel? How many houses will be built as a result of the package that he announced today?

What has happened to the medium-term financial strategy, which was always quoted in previous statements? Does the Chancellor now accept his predecessor's view that some stronger external discipline, such as full membership of the European monetary system or an independent central bank, is needed?

How does the Chancellor expect industry to expand on present interest rates? As his predecessor's forecast of the trade deficit was so wildly inaccurate, does he expect us to believe the forecast of £15 billion? Does he realise that he is presiding over an economy that is on the edge of recession and therefore needs prudent public expenditure, or does he still hold out to Conservative Members the hope of tax cuts in his first Budget?

Mr. Major: There were so many inaccuracies in the hon. Gentleman's introduction that I can scarcely list them all. We are certainly not in a position of recession. We are forecasting further growth, although slower than before. The slowdown in growth is necessary if we are to bring down inflation and ensure that there is a return to the steady and sustained growth that we have had for the past eight years. We are not prepared to let inflation get out of hand. Although that means slower growth next year, it is necessary for that to happen before we return to the levels of growth that we have seen in the past two or three years.

The hon. Gentleman's suggestion that there is a standstill in public services is a parody of my statement today which provides an extra £350 million in capital for roads, £190 million for housing, £100 million for education, £120 million in capital for health, £250 million for urban development corporations and £195 million for rail services. Clearly, the hon. Gentleman did not hear me mention that the homelessness package will provide an extra 15,000 homes and that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment will make a further statement about the details later today.

On transport, the increase in capital over the next two years is £1·8 billion, which, even in the hon. Gentleman's wildest imagination, cannot possibly be a standstill.

Sir William Clark (Croydon, South): Does my right hon. Friend agree that his reaffirmation of his tight fiscal and monetary policy will be widely welcomed not only in the House but in the City? Does he agree that this year's public expenditure and next year's are the same proportion of GDP, which means that we are on target? For too long, the Opposition, and often the media, have been talking down sterling and our economic performance. They never once give any credit for our achievements. It was interesting to watch the reception that the Opposition gave to my right hon. Friend's statement. They were glum. If the Autumn Statement had been a bad statement, they would have been jumping with glee, as everyone knows. Let us not for one moment put off our strict monetary and fiscal controls until we have conquered inflation. There is no question but that the whole country will be grateful for that.

Mr. Major: I give my hon. Friend a categorical assurance that the reduction of inflation remains the Government's central and main priority, and that will continue. My hon. Friend is entirely right about public expenditure. We have maintained the target which we set ourselves on the ratio of expenditure to national income. That, too, is important as part of the counter-inflation policy. The reception that the Opposition gave the Autumn Statement speaks for itself. For them, bad news is often good news, and their glumness is self-evident.

There will be real improvements in services. They are eminently affordable because of the growth and improvement in the economy in recent years.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): Is the Chancellor aware that the most serious point in this serious economic statement is that the balance of payments is expected to be £20 billion this year and £15 billion next year, which is higher than the estimate in last year's Autumn Statement? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, to sustain this, he will have to attract money from overseas at high interest rates, thereby damaging manufacturing industry? Will he ensure that some assistance is given to manufacturing industry, possibly by increasing investment allowances?

Mr. Major: I do not underestimate the difficulties of the trade gap. The most serious problem that we face is undoubtedly inflation, and it will remain inflation. The right hon. Gentleman will have noticed the dramatic reduction in the trade gap, which we forecast, of well over 1·25 per cent. of GDP—one of the largest reductions year on year that we have seen.

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): My right hon. Friend has public finances under excellent control. His calm presentation is in pleasant contrast to the gabbled pronouncements of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith). I realise that the other half of his Budget, on revenue, will not be formulated until February or March. However, when he comes to formulate the tax side of his Budget, will he bear in mind that a large surplus is not necessarily an undisguised blessing and that he should be thinking about a balanced Budget? Will he reject the advice of some Opposition Members and others who argue—for their own sake, I suspect—that there should be substantial tax increases to create a large surplus in the Budget when a balanced Budget would be the most necessary and desirable?

Mr. Major: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his opening remarks and also for the first budgetary representation I have received. As my right hon. Friend will know, our policy has been for a balanced Budget in the medium term, although, in the short term, we need to retain a strong fiscal position.

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): In spite of the Chancellor's comment about the reduction in the trade gap this coming year, is it not clear that the additional deficit of some £15 billion will result, together with the deficit over the past three years, in a cumulative current account deficit of £50 billion, equal to one half of the total net assets earned by this country over the centuries in its dealings with other nations? Is that not evidence of a serious loss of competitiveness in British industry and British trade? What proposals does he have for dealing with that loss of competitiveness and what are his assumptions about the exchange rate in the coming year?

Mr. Major: The right hon. Gentleman defines the wrong cause when he refers to the size of the trade gap. The substantial problem is the level of demand, rather than the extent of competitiveness. The fact that British industry is competitive at the present levels of exchange rate is more than evidenced by the tremendous growth of exports in the past year, which most certainly would not have occurred if that were not true. If the right hon. Gentleman cares to look up the figures, he will see that the growth in our exports far exceeds the growth in the level of world trade. Like the right hon. Gentleman, I am keen to see the deficit reduced, although I draw to his attention the fact that we have perhaps the second largest net overseas investments in the world.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): Can the Chancellor of the Exchequer assure us that ample funds will be provided for the security forces and the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Northern Ireland in the fight against terrorism, as such terrorism must be extirpated regardless of the financial cost?

Mr. Major: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for making that point. We all have great admiration for the work of the security forces in Northern Ireland, and they will continue to receive our full support.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): I understood the Chancellor to say that there would be an increase in expenditure from £168 billion to £203 billion over a relatively short period. If the Government really have the defeat of inflation as their first priority, will the increase be met out of taxation or by a decrease in the sums available for the repayment of the national debt? If the second option is chosen, how will he prevent inflation in future years, when those huge sums seep into the general economy?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman may have misheard the figures. The increase in expenditure on the general Government expenditure measure next year will be £5·5 billion, and he will observe that we have a strong fiscal surplus.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that Conservative Members view with equanimity his statement that 1990 will not be an easy year because the corollary is that 1991 and 1992 will be very difficult years for the Opposition?

May I welcome the fact that reports in the newspapers about the Autumn Statement are belied by what my right hon. Friend has said in the House this afternoon? Matters are by no means as gloomy as some representatives of the media would have us believe. However, does he agree that the Government should continue to reduce the proportion of GNP that public expenditure takes? It is only by doing that that the supply side reforms which have done so much to produce high growth over the past 10 years can be continued.

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is entirely right that it remains our medium-term objective to reduce public expenditure as a proportion of national income. My hon. Friend can be utterly sure that we are determined to get inflation down further, and that will be a significant part of our economic policy for the future.

My hon. Friend referred to matters trailed in the newspapers. The situation is by no means as gloomy as some of them portray. Growth will continue. There is no recession. Investment will continue. Inflation will fall and the trade gap, too, will fall.

Mr. Heffer: Is not the right hon. Gentleman speaking with two voices? On the one hand, he tells his hon. Friends that he is doing his best to cut public expenditure, while on the other hand he has made a mini U-turn by deciding to listen to some of his Back Benchers and the Opposition Front-Bench spokesmen and proposing to increase public expenditure in certain directions.

[Mr. Heffer]

Would it not be better if, in increasing public expenditure on housing—which I fully support—the right hon. Gentleman agreed that the only bodies that can deal with homelessness are the local authorities, and that they ought to be given greater help in doing so? Should not the money be directed to local authorities—and increased—to help those in local authorities to deal with homelessness, the greatest scandal that the Government face?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman does me an injustice by suggesting that what I say to Opposition Members differs from what I say to my hon. Friends. But I am bound to say, "If you can't ride two horses, perhaps you ought not to be in the circus." Our policy is to cut public expenditure proportionately to national income, and that certainly leaves the opportunity for public expenditure increases on priority programmes. That has been our policy—and has been carried out as our policy—for a considerable number of years.

The hon. Gentleman asked about homelessness. I am very pleased at the package that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be announcing this afternoon. Local authorities have a role, but not, I think, the only role, and the direction in which the resources are to go is the best direction that will produce the best result for the homeless.

Mr. Ian Stewart (Hertfordshire, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that it would not have been possible to allocate considerable extra resources to priority areas of expenditure, and at the same time to exercise general constraint over total public expenditure, had it not been for the saving of debt interest, which is the direct result of responsible budgets over many years? Will he not hesitate —in support of tight monetary policy—to introduce an austere Budget in the spring if necessary, recollecting that tight monetary policy is most effective in bringing down inflation when it is coupled with tight fiscal policy?

Mr. Major: I shall introduce next spring the Budget that I think is right for the country in the circumstances that prevail then. My hon. Friend is entirely right about debt interest. There is a saving between this year and next year of £2 billion in debt interest because of the prudent and successful manner in which the economy has been run in recent years. That means that this taxpaying generation will be the first for 200 years to pass a smaller level of debt on to the next generation.

Mr. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Chancellor aware that, although the House is properly and understandably divided on macro-economic issues, we are almost completely united in wanting the Treasury to provide full and immediate compensation to haemophiliacs affected by the AIDS virus. As a former Minister with responsibility for the disabled he must understand that, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer he is in a powerful position to do something about it. Will he help please?

Mr. Major: The whole House knows the sincerity with which the right hon. Gentleman speaks on these matters. However, this is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health. The Government made £10 million available to the Macfarlane Trust last year and the Department of Health has always made it clear that if representations were made that further contributions were necessary, it would be prepared to consider them.

Mr. John Townend (Bridlington): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend on keeping a firm control on public spending this year despite all the pressures. I am sure that his statement will reinforce the Government's policy to bring inflation down and will be welcomed in the City. What is the level of the contingency reserve for next year? Is he satisfied that it will be adequate as it has been overspent by £1 billion this year? Will he consider returning to the practice of looking at broad money when fixing monetary policy?

Mr. Major: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that the control of public expenditure is vital, and we will maintain that control in future. I have set a figure of £3 billion for the reserve for the first year of the account, £6 billion for the second and £9 billion for the third. That is smaller than in the past because some local authority expenditure will no longer come out of the reserve as it is now dealt with outside the planning total, but within general Government expenditure. The overspending of the reserve this year was overwhelmingly due to an overspend by local authorities on current and capital accounts of £2·75 billion and a shortfall in privatisation receipts of £0·75 billion.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): Does the Chancellor accept that the only way in which the deficit can be reduced to £15 billion as forecast is either by recession or depreciation—or both?

Mr. Major: No. We have neither, and the hon. Gentleman is entirely wrong.

Mrs. Edwina Currie (Derbyshire, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that during his excellent statement the faces of the Opposition Members slowly became glummer and glummer? The extra £2·6 billion for the National Health Service must mean that spending on health in this country will be at record levels. Is it not time that we took the Opposition's claim that we are out to destroy the NHS, wrapped it in £2·6 billion and stuffed it down their unwilling throats?

Mr. Major: I have less forceful tendencies than my hon. Friend. However, I certainly accept the thrust of her points. It is perfectly clear that good news is bad news for the Opposition. Their expressions showed that only too clearly today.

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): Will the Chancellor confirm that his forecast of an increase in gross domestic product of 1·25 per cent. next year is based on a number of assumptions, perhaps the most crucial being the level of sterling which the Treasury document refers to as remaining near or close to present levels? Will he allow the market to determine that, or will he try to buck the market, as did his predecessor? Has that fatal issue at the heart of the Government yet been reconciled?

Mr. Major: General Government expenditure is expressed in cash and the figure that I gave for it was £5·5 billion. I said earlier that our exports had done extremely well, notwithstanding the level of the exchange rate in recent months. I believe that a firm exchange rate is an important component of our anti-inflation policy.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): Is it not significant that in his main statement my right hon. Friend said nothing about the exchange rate? Is it not ironic that during this last year, while the Government have been proudly proclaiming that the pound will not fall, it has in fact fallen by 10 per cent. against the deutschmark? Is it not possible that the Government are moving towards being able to proclaim publicly that it is not possible for them or any Government to decide the external value of the pound?

Mr. Major: As my hon. Friend will know, the exchange rate is not mentioned as a matter of course in the Autumn Statement year upon year. The present exchange value of sterling is almost precisely the same as it was two years ago.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer understand the concept of the warranted rate of economic growth? If he does, can he explain why it is so much lower in 1989 than it was in 1979? Will the deliberations of the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service on the Autumn Statement be helped or hindered by the appearance before it of the former Chancellor of the Exchequer and the former chief economic adviser to the Prime Minister?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman's latter point is most certainly not a matter for me. I certainly look forward to making an appearance before the Treasury and Civil Service Committee and all the delights that that usually provides. The hon. Gentleman will be well aware of the economic growth in recent years, and we have forecast further growth next year.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): Is my right hon. Friend aware that there will be a warm welcome for two increases in real terms which he did not mention this afternoon—those for the arts and for overseas aid?

Mr. Major: My right hon. Friend is entirely correct. There has been a significant increase both for the arts and for overseas aid in the plans announced today.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): One of the right hon. Gentleman's first observations when he became Chancellor was that if it is not hurting it is not working. How many more people will not be working as a result of the estimated decline in growth from 3·5 per cent. to 1·5 per cent?

Mr. Major: The crucial factor in how many people will be in work will be the level of wage settlements that are decided upon in the months to come.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Bearing in mind Opposition Member's correctly placed emphasis on manufacturing industry, will my right hon. Friend remind them that manufacturing output actually fell under the previous Labour Government, whereas it has risen substantially, especially in recent years, under this Government? Will he comment on the balancing item, which shows that our balance of payments deficit is not nearly as bad as the figures indicate?

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is certainly correct about the statistical difficulties of the balance of payments, although it is difficult to draw conclusions as to the precise extent to which the balance of payments deficit is overestimated. That it is overestimated is certain, but I suspect that most of the balancing item relates to capital rather than current, so I would not care to give an estimate of the extent to which it is inaccurate.

Mr. Peter L. Pike (Burnley): The Chancellor talks of reducing the trade deficit from £20 billion to £15 billion as though it would be an achievement. Does he recognise that investment in a key manufacturing region such as the north-west is 36 per cent. less in real terms than it was in 1979? Does he recognise also that he will do more to improve that great deficit if the Government do two things —first, take a positive approach to manufacturing industry and, secondly, take a positive approach to the regions, which would also be in the best interests of the nation as a whole?

Mr. Major: The regions have been doing extremely well over the past few years. The hon. Gentleman should bear in mind that the tremendous growth in investment is certainly welcome in terms of improved productive capacity in this country, but, in the short term, it is widening and not narrowing the trade deficit. In the medium term, it will undoubtedly narrow the trade deficit, and we welcome it from that point of view. The hon. Gentleman is entirely wrong to say that manufacturing investment has been falling. It has been rising, and rising substantially.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the genuine and general welcome to the increased expenditure for the National Health Service will grow throughout the country if he heeds the plea that has already been made this afternoon on behalf of haemophiliac AIDS victims? Will he please talk to our right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health and urge him to devote a significant proportion of that money to providing adequate compensation and not merely welfare payments to those people?

Mr. Major: I do not think that I have anything to add to my answer to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley). We all share the sympathy and concern that has been mentioned, and no doubt my right hon. and learned Friend will approach me if he thinks that it is necessary to do so.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Is the Chancellor of the Exchequer aware that, 10 years ago, one of his predecessors said that the Tory Government were inviting the British people to ride in a solid gold Cadillac called monetarism? The right hon. Gentleman has had to attend the House today with another vehicle, a junk bond economy vehicle. The economy is now being put into reverse. He is asking the British working classes to tighten their belts to save the economy. Instead he should take back the £26·2 billion which, cumulatively, has gone into the pockets of the wealthiest 1 per cent. of the population. If he wants another £1·3 billion, why does he not stop water privatisation? There is some money there which he could transfer to the Health Service.

Mr. Major: As the hon Gentleman may have heard mentioned a few moments ago, we have just transferred a substantial amount of money—£2·6 billion—to the National Health Service, which is a substantial increase in real terms. If the hon. Gentleman wants to remind people

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about 1979, I can remind him about the substantial reduction in capital expenditure on the National Health Service which occurred in the period up to 1979.

Mr. Donald Thompson (Calder Valley): Does not my right hon. Friend agree that there is no part of the economy or services which, between now and 1979, could be compared to the advantage of the Opposition? That is why the Opposition select various overseas examples from countries which often have worse underlying economies than ours.

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is entirely right. The Opposition are specialists in fantasy figures.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): With the announcement in the past few hours that there was a 1·1 per cent. reduction in manufacturing output in September, and with the problem of an unclosable trade gap, why do the figures—published by the Government and just made available in the Vote Office—show a steady reduction in support for trade and industry over the next three years? Surely that is exactly where the money should go, and yet, in all the projections, the budget allocations and the planning totals are down for subsequent years.

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman is entirely wrong. Industry does not want handouts; it wants the right economic tax structure and bases, which is what it has. The output figure to which he referred is a one month's figure and is known to be an erratic indicator. Output has not fallen during the past three months.

Mr. John Butterfill (Bournemouth, West): Does my right hon. Friend accept that, at a time of economic restraint, most people are glad that he has been able to concentrate on investment for the future and provision for the sick and needy? Does he share my concern that the Labour party did not welcome the huge investment in housing but instead requested that it should be given to the municipal authorities? Does he share my suspicion that the Labour party wishes to recreate the feudalism of the massive municipal council estates? Has the Labour party perhaps learnt that those who we have set free through the right to buy are no longer voting Labour?

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is right about that and he is also entirely right to draw attention to the 10 per cent. real increase in capital investment in the public sector for the forthcoming year.

Mr. Jim Cousins (Newcastle upon Tyne, Central): Does the Chancellor accept that his statement today showed a cut in spending on science compared to last year's plans and no real growth for next year? What would he say to the scientific community, whose hopes of sustained investment in Britain's long-term economic future will have been dashed?

Mr. Major: I do not accept what the hon. Gentleman says because he is wrong. There is to be an 8 per cent. increase in science expenditure in the coming year which is on top of a 24 per cent. increase—I take that figure from memory—last year.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Will my right hon. Friend accept congratulations on the public sector surplus of £12 billion for the forthcoming year, which shows that the tight fiscal stance, alongside the high cost of money, is bearing down on the inflation rate? Will he note the welcome given to the targeted increases in public expenditure, particularly in areas which will affect the supply side of the economy, such as transport? Will he confirm that these increases in public expenditure are not inflationary, particularly when the cost-benefit analysis shows that their benefit to the economy will be greater than their cost?

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend is entirely correct. The increases are affordable and targeted on priority areas. My hon. Friend slightly underestimated the public sector debt repayment figure, which is £12·5 billion.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): In view of what he said last year, it is perfectly understandable that the Chancellor's predecessor has not turned up today.

Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that today's statement will mean continued misery for millions of people who are repaying mortgages and who will continue to face high interest payments? Does not the Chancellor recognise—with his background, perhaps he should—that there are so many people who could never afford a mortgage, the homeless and the near-homeless, who are desperately in need of rented accommodation, whose problems will certainly not be resolved in any way by the small amount of rented accommodation that the Chancellor has predicted will be available. Do the Chancellor and the Prime Minister understand the problem? Will they be visiting homeless people and those in bed-and-breakfast accommodation this coming Christmas?

Mr. Major: It was precisely because of concern about people in difficult circumstances that the targeted increases in the new homelessness package were brought about. They should be a significant help. I entirely understand the difficulty that high mortgage rates are creating for many people. However, if it is necessary to bring down inflation and to use monetary policy to do so, we must do that. If inflation gets out of hand, everybody will be hurt—home owners and non-home owners alike.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on his sound and sensible address, but will he tell me whether he is concerned or worried about the alarming increase shown in table 11 of Britain's net contribution to the EEC, which has increased from £1 billion in the last financial year to £2,000,030,000, which is £3 per week for each British family? Will he carry on the excellent work of the Prime Minister in seeking to reduce that crazy high figure that is costing every family in Britain far too much?

Mr. Major: I certainly noticed the figure to which my hon. Friend refers, but he will know that it is substantially less than it was before its renegotiation by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: It is the highest ever.

Mr. Major: For the future, I know that my hon. Friend will join me in saying that there are still substantial amendments to be made to the common agricultural policy.

Mr. Stuart Bell (Middlesbrough): Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer note that his predecessor regularly came to the Dispatch Box at the time of the Autumn Statement to tell us that he was wrong about inflation, wrong about the money supply, wrong about the trade deficit and wrong about the state of the economy? Is it not a fact that those wrong forecasts in the past have now led the Chancellor of the Exchequer to come to the House today to say that 1990 will not be an easy year? Will he confirm that, with inflation touching 6 per cent. in a year's time, with growth rates at 1·25 per cent. next year, and with the balance of payments moving from £20 billion to £15 billion, the British public will think that these last 10 wasted Tory years are the years that the locusts have eaten?

Mr. Major: The hon. Gentleman is wholly wrong. If he looks at the record of my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson), he will see, first, the most remarkable supply-side changes in the economy to have been delivered at any stage this century and, secondly, a far higher living standard across every range of income in this country than existed a few years ago. That is a record of which my right hon. Friend the Member for Blaby can be justly proud.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): Is my right hon. Friend aware that those of us who remember the record of the Labour Government from 1974 to 1979 are little short of amazed at the effrontery of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith)? Would it not be useful, as we are looking back to 1979, to look back a little further, and to recognise that the events that we are now seeing in East Germany are at last releasing the people of the countries of eastern Europe from the miseries of the Weimar Republic, where all this trouble started, when there was a Government who could not control inflation? Is that not something that the British people should ponder?

Mr. Major: It is entirely true that, when people in eastern Europe are given a choice between Socialism and free markets, they choose free markets. It would be deeply embarrassing for the Opposition if I were to remind them of the period leading up to 1979 and of the significant cuts that they made in public investment; but if I am tempted, I am prepared to do so.

Mr. John P. Smith (Vale of Glamorgan): I was interested to hear the right hon. Gentleman say in the Autumn Statement that there will be an increase in benefits and that about 1·5 million families will get help. Can he tell me whether my constituents, Mrs. Hewson and her son, will benefit from that? That lady came to my surgery in tears the other week to explain that she receives an income of only £58 per week to keep herself and her son. She has been burgled and food taken from her pantry. She went to the Department of Social Security and got a loan that she cannot afford to pay back. I have just been told on the telephone that her benefit has now been stopped entirely. Will that lady benefit from the statement?

Mr. Major: It is impossible for me to comment on the particular circumstances of Mrs. Hewson, but I am sure that if she is in difficulties her local branch of the Department of Social Security will do everything that it can to help her.

The hon. Gentleman may know that, as I said in my statement, 500,000 long-term sick and disabled people will gain from the disability package; 200,000 people deferring pensions will now be able to draw whatever earnings they have, following the abolition of the earnings rule, and 2·25 million poorer pensioners will gain from the October income support and housing benefit increases.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order as the House knows, there is an important debate after this in which a great many hon. Members wish to participate. I shall call six more Back-Bench Members from both sides of the House, and I am afraid that we must then move on. I shall certainly bear in mind those hon. Members whom I have not been able to call when we come to debate this matter in the Queen's Speech.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): Is it not clear that my right hon. Friend's combination of a well-judged fiscal and monetary policy will be successful in bringing down not only the rate of inflation as measured by the RPI, with all its deficiencies, but also the rate of asset inflation, which has been such a powerful engine of the excessive domestic demand that our policies are now deisgned to curb?

Mr. Major: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. There is absolutely no doubt that the growth in asset inflation, especially in housing, has added to the extent of the credit boom and the consequent problem with inflation. My hon. Friend is quite correct.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Is it any wonder that Opposition Members are concerned about the implications of the Autumn Statement when we know that the money allowed to local authorities for the education of 92 per cent. of the nation's children will not rise next year even in line with inflation; and that at the moment schools are having to implement the new national curriculum, with all its additional resource implications, and to face new testing procedures, again with additional resource implications, and that there are severe teacher shortages up and down the land? What hope, what help, has the Chancellor offered to teachers and to children today?

Mr. Major: As it happens, a considerable amount of help, with a 10 per cent. real increase in education and science provision in the next year; a large increase in support for students and for the fabric and equipment in our schools and colleges. Capital spending per schoolchild is up 8 per cent. in real terms over recent years and local authority capital spending on education is up 25 per cent. in real terms, with three quarters of that money provided by central Government. That is the help that the hon. Lady has overlooked.

Mr. Charles Wardle (Bexhill and Battle): Is not my right hon. Friend's determination to control inflation the best possible news for this country? However, will not his projection of a £15 billion trade deficit depend to some extent on the strengthening of the surplus on invisibles? Will he tell the House the basis on which he calculates that improvement?

Mr. Major: During the past year invisibles have been depressed, largely because of a net outflow of interest payments on the invisible account, which is reducing the

[Mr. Major]

net figure substantially. We think that that will improve significantly in the next year. My hon. Friend is entirely right in intimating that control of inflation must have primacy.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): In view of the help that the right hon. Gentleman claims has been given to education, will he tell me why, in Tory-controlled Bradford, there are still 500 rotting temporary classrooms and why children in my constituency have to be bussed from three temporary classrooms, which are now long overdue for repair, to another school where the classrooms are wind and watertight? Is he saying in the Autumn Statement that there will be an injection of money into our education system so that the crumbling schools of Victorian Bradford, which have expanding school rolls, will be able to provide permanent extensions so that the temporary shanty town can be removed?

Mr. Major: The problem arises because Bradford has not been Tory for long enough.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): My right hon. Friend has announced welcome increases in spending on public services. Does he agree with me that that will go a long way towards ensuring that the rate of unemployment continues on a downward trend in the next financial year?

Mr. Major: Unemployment has fallen dramatically, but it is even more relevant that there are 2,750,000 more people in employment than in 1983. The future level of employment will depend on the future of wage settlements.

Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the 11 per cent. increase in expenditure on the arts is warmly welcomed, as a flourishing arts sector draws visitors to Britain whose spending helps the balance of payments? It must be right to build on our strengths, and to give the lie to any suggestion that the Conservative party does not care about the arts.

Mr. Major: My hon. Friend will also be pleased to hear that the arts programme is a three-year programme, which will provide a firm basis for forward planning by subsidised bodies. It allows for real growth of 7 per cent. next year and a further 2 per cent. the year after.

Mr. Ron Brown (Edinburgh, Leith): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it a breach of privilege for a Member of the House to be blackmailed by a known criminal—Dermot Redmond, of 21 Charles road, St. Leonard's-on-Sea, Sussex? Is it in order for that to happen, bearing in mind that he is using information stolen from the House by a former employee? Can the right hon. Gentleman give me some help and advice because, take it from me, other hon. Members could find themselves in the same position?

Mr. Speaker: I hope that no hon. Member is being blackmailed. If the hon. Gentleman is alleging a breach of privilege, it is best that he writes to me in the usual way, and I will carefully examine the matter.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry that I am not able to call the hon. Members who are rising to ask a question on the statement, but I will bear them in mind in the future.

Mr. Ian Bruce (Dorset, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: As long as it is not a continuation of the previous point of order.

Mr. Bruce: Conservative Members have noted that, during questions on a statement, as long as Opposition Members rise in their places, questions continue.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is a scandalous allegation for the hon. Member to make against the Chair. I hope that he will not continue with that line.

Vehicle Emissions (Reduction)

4.52 pm

Mr. Keith Mans (Wyre): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to encourage the fitting of catalytic converters to all new motor cars.

Just over a year ago I introduced a Bill, under the same procedure, to encourage the use of unleaded petrol. At the time, sales of unleaded petrol were less than 2 per cent. of sales and fewer than 1,500 filling stations sold unleaded petrol. Now, sales account for over 30 per cent., and over 80 per cent. of garages stock unleaded brands.

My intention was to speed up the transfer towards the use of unleaded petrol, and to cut the amount of lead in the atmosphere—that amount is now well below what it was a year ago.

My Bill is designed to reduce other emissions from vehicles. Apart from lead, car exhaust emissions contain carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide, which are associated with photochemical smog, acid rain and health risks, such as respiratory problems.

The latest European Community directive on small-car emissions means that all new cars will have to be fitted with a catalytic converter by 1 December 1992, and new models will have to be fitted with one five months prior to that date. Directives on larger cars are likely to repeat the small-car emissions standards and time scales.

I should like those standards to be applied sooner in Britain. We should not wait until the last minute to make those changes. My Bill provides that all new models would have to be fitted with a catalytic converter by 1 July 1990, and all new cars the following year.

To help the move towards cleaner car exhaust emissions, the Bill provides for tax incentives for car manufacturers and car owners to fit catalysts.

A reduction in new car tax, equivalent to 80 per cent. of the extra cost of fitting a catalyst, would apply to all new cars where work was carried out by the manufacturer. For owners of cars that can be fitted with a catalyst, a refund of the annual vehicle licence fee would meet most of the extra cost.

The catalyst is a relatively inexpensive item, which costs between £50 and £100 for most family cars. In addition, a stainless steel exhaust, and in most cases, fuel injection equipment has to be fitted. The total cost for most cars works out at under £400. Fuel injection equipment results in greater engine efficiency, which usually cancels out any loss of economy from the catalyst. A stainless steel exhaust gives savings in exhaust replacement costs over the lifetime of the motor car, and second-hand cars with catalysts normally command higher prices.

It has been suggested that fitting a catalyst will increase carbon dioxide emissions. That has to be balanced against the reduction in carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide emissions, which are both greenhouse gases. Carbon monoxide has a greater effect on global warming than carbon dioxide.

The final part of the Bill calls for the adoption of strict limits on emissions from diesel engined vehicles. Diesel engines do not require lead additives in their fuel and their emissions are generally less polluting than petrol engines, but they produce higher levels of particulates, mainly hydrocarbons, which cause an unpleasant smell and considerable soiling in built-up areas. Of greater importance is the reduction, which they cause, in visibility and the formation of photochemical smog. Recent studies have shown that the fumes are likely to be carcinogenic, as well as causing respiratory problems in some individuals.

The European Community has not tackled the problem of diesel engines effectively. European emissions standards for diesel engine vehicles are well below those proposed in the United States of America. The Bill would set limits for emissions from diesel-engined vehicles, in line with the standards the United States Government are bringing into force in 1991 and 1994. They would cover all diesel-engined vehicles and would lead to improvements in engine design, better fuel quality, a reduction in the sulphur content of the fuel, and the eventual fitting of improved catalytic traps.

Cleaner car exhaust emissions result in a cleaner and healthier environment. The Government are rightly committed to such an environment. We must not delay reducing emissions from petrol-engined vehicles and we must bring standards up to those in Germany and the United States of America.

We are in a strong position to give a lead to the European Community by tackling the problem of emissions from diesel-engined vehicles now. Let us reinforce our commitment to the environment by doing so.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Keith Mans, Mr. Andrew Mitchell, Mr. Simon Burns, Mr. Ian Taylor, Mr. Jacques Arnold, Mr. Anthony Coombs, Mr. James Cran, Mr. Julian Brazier, Miss Ann Widdecombe and Mr. Steve Norris.

VEHICLE EMISSIONS (REDUCTION)

Mr. Keith Mans accordingly presented a Bill to encourage the fitting of catalytic converters to all new motor cars: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Thursday 16 November and to be printed.—[Bill 221.]

European Community (Developments)

4.59 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Francis Maude): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the White Paper, Developments in the European Community January-June 1989 (Cm. 801).

Once every six months the House has an opportunity for a wide-ranging debate on developments in the European Community. The document before us is the White Paper covering events during the Spanish Presidency in the first six months of this year.

Customarily, the House has used this occasion not just to discuss the achievements of the past, although they are considerable, but to look at the possibilities and prospects for the future. For that reason, the timing of the debate is spectacularly good. It would, of course, be unnatural in the course of it to say nothing about the past weeks' events on the Community's frontier.

Last week, in East Germany, we saw successively the resignation of the Politburo, the appointment of successors, the opening of its borders, and a commitment to political reform. There are times when we feel a sudden seismic movement in history, when almost the only certainty is that things can never again be the same. Last Thursday and Friday was such a time.

I arrived in Bonn late on Thursday night for routine discussions on Community matters with my German colleagues. I felt that I had been privileged to share those moving and momentous hours with my German colleagues. They know that we share their exhilaration at those dramatic changes, at this further proof that, as the Prime Minister said at the Guildhall on Monday,

"when people are free to choose, they choose freedom".

Of course my German colleagues and I talked about the dramas of the night. But although their hearts and minds must have been in Berlin, I was profoundly impressed that their response was to turn back to the more prosaic Community matters which I had gone there to discuss. That was perhaps symbolic of our joint commitment to the Community; to our common conviction that the Community can rise to tomorrow's challenges only if it is united in its determination to make the Community succeed. One of those challenges will undoubtedly be the developments in East Germany. Community Heads of Government will have the chance to reflect on this at their meeting this Saturday.

It must be clear to all that the issue for the time being is not reunification, but reform. It must be clear that our common objective must be the establishment of a genuine democracy, with free elections. It is a hazardous process; and we must not risk its failure.

The Community must show that it is ready to extend the hand of friendship to the emerging democracies. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister foreshadowed that in her speech at Bruges last year, when she urged the Community never to forget those east of the iron curtain, cut off by it from their roots in European culture, freedom and identity.

If the iron curtain is indeed coming down, we in the west need to be imaginative and responsible in reacting to the new opportunities created for those behind it. We must be imaginative and responsible with cool heads and warm hearts, for we need to be alive to new risks, as well as new opportunities, for eastern Europe.

We must ensure that we in the west hold firm to the policies and principles that have served us so well for so long. The Community must rise to this historic challenge. I have no doubt that it will, but in the same way that reform in East Germany, Poland and Hungary, will only endure if built soundly and steadily, we must ensure that the development of the Community, for development there will be, is both robust and measured. That overriding need is independent of developments in eastern Europe.

The later stages of the prescription for economic and monetary union set out in the Delors report do not cease to be bureaucratic and centralised simply because the Berlin wall has been breached.

It has been said, and said rightly, that the European Community has been a beacon to peoples living under tyranny behind the iron curtain. What they have seen is a Community founded on freedom and building in prosperity. If that beacon is to shine as brightly in the future, we must resolve in unity to build surely and soundly.

The White Paper reviews Community developments in the first six months of this year. It covers a wide range of activity, from the environment to trade policy, from the greenhouse effect to the GATT. It also covers the Community's relations with other European countries, and while eastern Europe justifiably holds our attention, let us not forget the six members of the European Free Trade Association.

I am sure that the House would want to pay tribute to the Spanish Presidency's achievements on the single market: 68 measures removing barriers to trade in the Community were agreed or adopted in the first half of the year. That is the best record of any presidency. Now more than half of the 1985 Commission White Paper measures have been agreed—an average of a measure every 10 days. As is now widely recognised throughout the Community, our role in those deliberations was central and influential.

The thrust of the single market is now liberal and deregulatory. Because we have argued our case reasonably and persuasively, and because it is a good case, we have won the arguments.

For almost two years, I attended the Internal Market Council, conducting negotiations for 1992. During that time I voted against a single market on only one occasion. That was not because progress was too fast, but because it was too slow. I am concerned that progress should be sustained. We earnestly hope that by the turn of the year, the French presidency will have achieved, as did the Spanish, a record number of agreements. We shall work hard to assist them.

In June the European Council in madrid revised the single market priorities to reflect progress that had already been made. The new priorities included financial services, technical standards, transport and public purchasing. I think it lamentable that some of those priorities are moving so slowly.

It is a commonplace that travellers in the Community pay extortionate fares to subsidise national air carriers who are protected from competition. The European Commission has a proposal to reform this. I hope that all 12 member states will give that proposal the same robust support that we do.

We must end the absurdity whereby empty lorries cross frontiers every day because protectionist regulations

prevent them from picking up return loads. Again, the Commission has proposals for reform. We hope that they will advance swiftly.

Telecommunications are among the most protected industries in the Community. It has been estimated that of £50 billion spent yearly on telecommunications in the Community, no less than £4 billion could be saved if there were liberalisation. The European Commission wants this; we want this; but some of our partners are blocking it.

There has been good progress on frontiers. Many of the problems to which we pointed at the outset have now been widely understood, and solutions are being sought.

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): For some time the Minister has been telling us how robust, vigorous and marvellous the Government are and I concede that that is so in the free market area that he has described. There is a social area as well, however, where the Government have been extremely curmudgeonly, one example being their recent failure to agree the markings on cigarette packets. In due course I hope that the hon. Gentleman will discuss those things.

Mr. Maude: I shall certainly come to those matters and I am sure that I shall deal with them to the hon. Gentleman's complete satisfaction.

I recollect that at the start of the discussions on frontiers it was suggested that because we identified problems in the proposals we were somehow being negative or obstructive. The reality, of course, is precisely the reverse. We all want it to be easier to cross frontiers. I am confident that that can be achieved. But no one would thank us if the price for that was a reduction in effective action against terrorism, drugs and crime.

Unless problems are identified realistically and early, it is quite impossible to devise solutions in good time. We are centrally involved in the search for such solutions, and I am confident that they can be found. So throughout the single market programme, it is we who want progress, it is we who want liberalisation, it is we who want integration. It can be seen that the Commission, in its admirable drive for progress, has no stauncher ally than us.

Increasingly alarming has been the growing gap between agreement and implementation, between rhetoric and action. The Commission has properly taken that seriously. The figures show that our record is exemplary. The Commission will have our full-hearted support in requiring other member states to meet their obligations.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): Has my hon. Friend seen the report in the *Financial Times* a few days ago which completely misinterpreted the Commission's document on implementation to suggest that we were in breach on many occasions? That simply was not the case. Does he agree that the *Financial Times* should rectify that?

Mr. Maude: That should first be rectified by the Commission. When the figures and the report were published in the summer, I wrote immediately to the Commissioner responsible to point out that the figures on our record were wildly wrong. It is generally understood that our record is exemplary.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Is my hon. Friend aware that that attitude has been displayed not only in the top brass? When I had the honour to serve on a Committee of the European Parliament, some of our colleagues from other countries could not understand why we persisted in dotting the i's and crossing the t's. We did it because we knew that we should implement the measures under discussion so we had to get them right. Others took them more lightheartedly because they had no intention of implementing them.

Mr. Maude: My hon. Friend makes an excellent point. She is absolutely right. We take a literal view of our obligations, which means that before we sign up to a dossier or proposal we want to make sure that it will work satisfactorily in practice. As a result, we sometimes take longer than other countries to approve proposals. It is easy for people to sign up to something if they have no intention of implementing it.

I have a theory that the strength of a Government's commitment to the Community can be judged in inverse proportion to the grandiloquence of its rhetoric. There can be no two-speed Europe, with some countries matching their deeds to their words, but with others lagging far behind. That is something with which the House has always concerned itself. The interventions of my hon. Friends bear that out.

Mr. Gareth Wardell (Gower): Does the Minister agree that the Department of the Environment's interpretation of the 1976 bathing water directive defined bathing beaches in such a way that no beach in the Principality of Wales could be considered a bathing beach? The United Kingdom was not in compliance with the directive. Is the Minister proud of that?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman raises a fascinating point. I cannot give him a detailed answer off the top of my head. Our record on cleanliness of beaches is extremely good, as is our record on water quality and the cleanliness of our rivers. We have nothing to be ashamed of.

Mr. Wardell: Will the Minister confirm that the figures produced by the water authority in north-east England showed that Seaton Carew centre had 3 million E. coli per millilitre of water? Is that the type of standard of which he is proud?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman leads me onto matters on which he appears to have detailed knowledge. I should want to scrutinise his suggestions carefully and subject them to proper analysis to see whether they are borne out by the facts. I am confident that our record on the matter is good and that we have no reason to be ashamed of it.

The process of scrutiny is better developed in the House than almost anywhere else in the Community. It is a process to which the Government are wholeheartedly committed. The Procedure Committee, and the Scrutiny Committee under the chairmanship of the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing), have studied its future development. We shall study with care and sympathy the Procedure Committee's forthcoming report.

Two weeks ago as part of the process of scrutiny, the House debated economic and monetary union. Our policy is based on what was agreed unanimously at the Madrid council. It is essential that the Community should adhere to those conclusions. One conclusion was that the Delors report was no more than a basis for further work, and that no intergovernmental conference to consider further changes beyond the first stage should be held without full and adequate preparation. In our debate earlier this month, it emerged with remarkable clarity that there was

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no support in the House for stages 2 and 3 of the Delors report. That has been noted elsewhere in the Community. Indeed, it accords with a growing concern elsewhere in the Community.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): In view of the overwhelming events of the past week and the impact that they are bound to have on the Federal Republic of Germany, has my hon. Friend had any feedback from the Germans that their view on stages 2 and 3 of the Delors report may be significantly different in a few weeks' time?

Mr. Maude: The Government of the Federal Republic have no clear view on the timing of the next stages. A lively debate is in progress within that Government and in public about what the next step should be and I shall deal with that in due course.

We strongly support the commitment to stage 1 of Delors and we strongly support further steps to be made beyond that. But we should be clear that stage 1 will result in far-reaching changes to the economy of Europe. We hope that it can be completed quickly. We shall certainly not hold it back. The right time for an intergovernmental conference to consider treaty changes is when there is a clear view emerging on what treaty changes are needed.

Mr. Giles Radice (Durham, North): Do not the Government have the problem that no one is listening to them, first, because we are not a member of the exchange rate mechanism so we have not completed stage 1 and, secondly, because their plan for competing currencies does not find favour in Europe. The Government are not in a position to influence other Governments?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman has observed these matters for so long that he has perhaps lost touch with what is happening. Other Governments are certainly listening to us and we have discussed in detail and depth our paper and approach to the Community. As people study our approach and as our arguments are understood, we make headway. The fact that we have not yet joined the exchange rate mechanism makes no difference.

Mrs. Teresa Gorman (Billericay): Is my hon. Friend aware that the president of the Bundesbank has already welcomed our initiative on competing currencies and agrees with much of what we have to say?

Mr. Maude: He went further. He gave a warm endorsement to our approach. That is to be welcomed. There is huge scope within the existing treaty for rapid and dramatic changes. Until we have begun to exhaust those possibilities, further changes would be recklessly premature. Our own paper, published two weeks ago, set out an alternative approach; as my hon. Friend says, it was warmly endorsed by the president of the Bundesbank, and has attracted growing interest and support elsewhere. It will take progress substantially beyond that set out in stage 1 of Delors, and would, we argue, achieve the objectives of economic and monetary union. It need not be a slow process. We hope it could advance swiftly, but we must take the right decisions.

Economic and monetary union cannot be just a slogan: it would have to be made a practical reality, and we believe that our approach leads to that. Of course this will be discussed at the Strasbourg European Council, where there may also be discussion of the social dimension, with which my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Employment will deal at greater length when he winds up the debate.

We support the unanimous conclusion of the Madrid Council that the Community's top social priority should be job creation. We do not believe that the present draft of the social charter would achieve that. I stress that this is not only a United Kingdom view; both UNICE, the Europewide employers' organisation, and the European round table have given robust support to our views.

UNICE has said:

"The charter should give more recognition to the vital need for Europe to remain competitive in a global and open trading system, since that is the only way to guarantee the creation of wealth and of jobs".

The Madrid Council also said that the principle of subsidiarity should apply—that what can be done at national level should be done there, not at Community level. It is not enough to pay lip service to that principle; the substance of the text must reflect it——

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): That is what the charter says.

Mr. Maude: It may say it, but it does not do it. We should not just utter the word "subsidiarity" and assume that that is all that needs to be done. We must make sure that the proposals, directives and regulations emerging from the Community reflect the principle in practice, and that is what we shall seek to do.

Mr. Robertson: When the first draft of the charter came out, the Prime Minister said that it was Marxist in origin. We have now gone through several drafts watering down the original. Would the Minister say that the current draft is still of Marxist origin?

Mr. Maude: It is not a text that we could sign—it is wholly unacceptable. If implemented in a programme of proposals from the Commission it would put people out of work. The hon. Gentleman may want that, but we do not.

Mr. Marlow: Whether the charter is Marxist or not is irrelevant at this stage, but if it were passed would it not give more power to central bureaucratic institutions?

Mr. Maude: If, as we expect, a programme of action from the Commission leading to legislative proposals followed behind it, there would certainly be legislation at Community level which could more properly be dealt with at national level.

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): I am grateful to my hon. Friend, because he has been giving way a great deal —*[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) says that I should not intervene, but he has already done so several times.

As, on all the evidence, the premier capitalist economy of Europe—West Germany—is wildly more successful than any other economy, including that of the United Kingdom, and seems happy with the social charter, why are we so panic-stricken about it?

Mr. Maude: Perhaps unknowingly my hon. Friend has put his finger on the point. West Germany has a high level of protection and regulation, so it may not be averse to less prosperous parts of the Community having to shoulder the same amount of regulation, thereby removing the competitive advantage that they may have. We are

concerned that less prosperous parts of the Community might be denied the advantages of the lower costs which might improve their economic standing. That is reflected in our view and in that expressed by UNICE and the European round table.

Mr. Dykes: These matters must be of great concern to all hon. Members. Are we living in the real world or are we indulging in the rhetoric that my hon. Friend has denounced? If Germany is protectionist, bureaucratic, subsidised and inefficient, can we have a bit of that here? How come it is so prosperous?

Mr. Maude: I did not say that Germany was inefficient; I said that employers and industrialists there work with a high level of regulation to which they have become accustomed and with which they can cope. But if anyone seriously thinks that the economy of Portugal will be helped by having German levels of regulation imposed on it from Brussels, he is wrong——

Mr. Robertson: Why do they support the social charter?

Mr. Maude: The Portuguese are becoming extremely anxious about what is contained in that programme and in the action programme following it up. The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) should take the trouble —he has not done so—to talk to his Socialist colleagues in Portugal, whereupon he will find that their view is very different from his. They take seriously the process of job creation and the need to protect jobs—clearly, the hon. Gentleman does not.

Mrs. Gorman: Is it not true that the productivity of German workers in much higher than that of those in this country? For example, Ford workers in Germany are 50 per cent. more productive than Ford workers here, and because of that the Germans can carry such an enormous burden of social legislation as is incorporated in the charter.

Mr. Maude: Each country and economy in Europe has developed a system of social legislation appropriate to itself. There is no reason to suppose that uniform social regulations imposed from Brussels will help anyone. The Germans may have come to live satisfactorily with their system. It works there, but that does not mean that it would work here or in Portugal or Greece. We shall strongly resist its imposition here.

In our determination to carry forward the process of internal integration of the Community, it is essential, perhaps especially at the moment, to keep our eyes on the Community's relations with those beyond its frontiers. We are very clear that Europe after 1992 must not be closed, or be seen to be closed, to the world outside.

We have argued long and hard, and with formidable success, against fortress Europe. It is essential that the Community gives full effect to the principles of liberal trade beyond its frontiers that it has now firmly espoused. In particular, we are very glad that real discussions are now taking place with the member countries of the European Free Trade Association.

The Commission is due to report to the Council later this month, and there will be an EC-EFTA ministerial meeting on 19 December, which could well open the way for detailed negotiations during 1990. The prospect of a wider single market of all 18 countries is a stimulating one. Of course, the negotiations will raise difficult issues, but difficult issues can be resolved with good will and determination. We firmly believe that a greatly enhanced EC-EFTA relationship is both in our interest and in the interest of the Community. This is a cause which we have promoted, and we wish it well.

I started by talking a little of events in eastern Europe. The present tide of events has been long awaited and fervently hoped for, and it is essential that we do all in our power to sustain the process of change. At all levels, I believe, the response has been generous and imaginative.

For ourselves, we have set up know-how funds for both Poland and for Hungary. These will be worth significant sums, focused on specific projects crucial to successful reform. They range from programmes on parliamentary democracy to agricultural reform. We are now looking at ways of increasing our support.

At Community level, the response has also been excellent. Apart from immediate food aid in Poland, worth £70 million, longer-term support is being provided by a substantial package of trade liberalisation measures. This means an end to all discriminatory quantitative restrictions on Polish and Hungarian imports from the beginning of next year. Providing a market for competitive goods is the best stimulus to economic reform.

In addition, the Council has approved a package worth about £200 million next year covering support for agricultural reform, environmental measures and management training in both Hungary and Poland. That signals that we stand four square with the peoples of eastern Europe in their determination to achieve reform that endures.

People of my generation in eastern Europe have never known freedom or tasted the prosperity that for us is routine. Now at long last across Europe tyranny is retreating and a new freedom is dawning. Those who have known only the cold repression of totalitarian regimes will need our help. We must not fail them.

5.29 pm

Mr. George Robertson (Hamilton): Precious few people around last Wednesday, when this subject was slated for discussion, could have imagined what the succeeding seven days would produce. As the Minister has rightly said, these seven days have seen a political earthquake in Europe, and its tremors will inevitably dominate the European Community, the wider continent and our future in a way undreamed of last week. In this debate we may be considering events and a White Paper that cover the first half of 1989, but these events include the germs of the situation that we see in graphic form today.

How western Europe rises to the remarkable new challenges in the next few months, which will determine what continent we shall inhabit for generations to come, is of crucial importance. This week, when we talk about Europe we no longer speak about western Europe. The whole focus has shifted and when Community leaders meet this Saturday and again in three weeks' time, they will no longer simply be involved in the internal affairs of the 12 European Community nations. They have to be conscious of, and concerned with, those other members of a European family who want to rejoin and to act with us, and who will sorely need us as well.

We must share the emotion and the sheer joy that was written all over the faces in Berlin last weekend, of a people free at last for the first time since 1933—free from tyranny,

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fear and oppression. We must ensure that, never again, will they disappear behind walls, fences or barriers. Nobody who ever saw that Berlin wall, with the death strips, the shrapnel guns, the dogs, the watch towers and the floodlights could have been unaffected watching the pictures of last weekend, as the obscenity that was the boundary between East and West finally broke under the pressure of the people. Last week was a turning point in all our lives.

What is now in question is nothing less than the whole architecture of Europe and, along with that, understandable uncertainties and concerns. Undeniably, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to help, or hinder, the evolution of a stable new European order. That task will demand genuine vision and imagination and the ambition to seize the moment, like the leap of imagination that produced the Marshall plan that helped post-war Europe to recover its democratic vitality or the Bretton Woods settlement, which saved the world's economic system.

What concerns us in this debate is what role Britain will play in this historic process. The first guiding principle must be that Europe will not encourage or reinforce the drive to democracy in Europe by looking constantly inwards at itself. This is precisely the time to look at what sort of European framework will be relevant, in two, five, 10 or 20 years' time, and to start along the road towards it.

In saying that, we do not in any way accept the Prime Minister's idea of some dead stop in the pace of European co-operation, to have a leisurely look around. Nor do we accept that our only role in helping the eastern European states is, at variable speeds, to complete a political and economic union, the nature of which is still not agreed or even designed. Instead, we say that we must seriously and urgently look at the breathtaking opportunity before us to embrace a truly wider Community and take the necessary steps while the opportunity is still with us.

Some will say that this is what the Prime Minister was referring to when she spoke in the House yesterday about her dream of a democratic Europe stretching to the Chinese border, but is that the case? As she talked about this greater, wider Europe, this week she sent a Minister to Brussels to block cancer warnings on cigarette packets. As she defends national sovereignty in economic and monetary decisions, her Chancellor had just 25 minutes of British sovereignty between the Bundesbank's decision to raise interest rates and our requirement to follow it.

On Monday night, as she said at the Lord Mayor's banquet:

> "We must stretch out the hand of co-operation and develop new forms of association with the emerging democracies of eastern Europe".

her Government had given no welcome even to the application already on the table, from Austria. As she underlines the truth that only economic success will guarantee the existence of pluralistic democracies emerging in eastern Europe, the British funds to Poland and Hungary amount to a meagre £25 million to each country, spread over five crucial and decisive years. What a contrast with the £450 million-worth of aid voted by the American Congress to Poland last night.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Does the hon. Gentleman recall that at the Paris summit, the British Prime Minister took the initiative, which was agreed to by others at the summit, that the European Commission should co-ordinate aid programmes to, initially, Poland and Hungary? Was this not a fine British initiative, as a result of which the Commission is co-ordinating aid from 24 different nations?

Mr. Robertson: That was a commendable initiative and the Commission is to be congratulated on the efficiency with which it is carrying out its task. Sometimes the Government, who spend much of their time and energy attacking the Commission, forget that the Commission can act. It is using principally Japanese funds to disperse food aid to Poland. I am referring here to bilateral aid. The Minister did not mention £5 million—the small change of a Government Department—being given over five years as bilateral aid to reconstruct the economies of Poland and Hungary and to underpin the democratic system.

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman should know, and if he does not know, then he should find out, that the know-how fund is not there to reconstruct economies. It is there to provide know-how in a whole range of sectors such as developing elections and political democracy, and banking.

Mr. Robertson: Of course it cannot reconstruct an economy, but what are the Government giving to reconstruct the Polish economy? I know how much the know-how fund is giving, and I also know what it is being given for. I have been asked by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office to be a member of the advisory board on the Polish know-how fund, which meets tomorrow. I am also aware of the limitations of £5 million, given the nature of the Polish crisis and how much needs to be done. The American Congress had the generosity to recognise that, with the amount that it voted last night. I hope that we shall hear no more triumph from the Government over the tiny amount of money being given to Poland.

As the Prime Minister draws grand designs on the map and in the air, her approach to European co-operation in reality is nit-picking, carping and mean-spirited. We are repeatedly marginalised and ignored. The veto on the social charter, which has already been watered down and weakened in key areas in the attempt to get consensus in Europe—a consensus that embraces all the countries that the Minister this evening arrogantly said that he is defending—will leave Britain isolated, and exposed, yet again, as a spoiler in the Strasbourg summit in December. It is again stark evidence of the denial to the British people of the reasonable employment standards that they might expect from the completion of the single market.

Mr. Marlow: I agree very much with the imaginative first part of the hon. Gentleman's speech about the changes in Europe—the whole of Europe rather than parts of Europe. Why is it that the social charter is necessary?

Mr. Robertson: The hon. Gentleman has rocked me by saying that he agrees with the first part of my speech. I must now ask myself what was wrong with it. The social charter is necessary. If we are to have an internal market affecting the interest of employers and of capital, then it is eminently reasonable—all our colleagues in Europe agree, whether they are Left-wing or Right-wing—that the level playingfield must include some justice for those who are

employed. That is why the charter was instituted and why 11 out of the 12 countries in the Community agree with it and none of them agrees with us.

The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. Tim Eggar): Do the hon. Gentleman and his party support everything in the current draft of the social charter?

Mr. Robertson: No. We think it is too weak. We think that the partners in Europe have weakened it too much in a vain attempt to get the negative and reactionary elements of the Government to climb on board in what they believe to be in the general interests of completing the internal market.

Mr. Dykes: Does the hon. Gentleman further agree that the social charter provisions, in whatever language, are an equal component in the preamble of the Single European Act just as the internal market is? They are not inferior to the single market.

Mr. Robertson: I agree totally. The Prime Minister accepted the Single European Act with all the commitments in the preamble, just as she accepted the Stuttgart declaration, which made many of the same points. The social charter is a direct and logical lineage with those commitments.

Sir Anthony Meyer (Clwyd, North-West): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Robertson: We believe that the hon. Gentleman is a stalking horse and a candidate for the leadership of the Conservative party, so how can I not give way to him?

Sir Anthony Meyer: Could we not have a serious point? By stripping away what he sees as objections to the Prime Minister's attitude in these matters, the hon. Gentleman is hinting at his party's policy. When he was speaking positively on what his party's policy would be, he stopped short of saying how far he and his party were prepared to go in accepting a limitation on the right of Britain, or any other country, to exercise their veto on decisions which he would maintain—and I would agree—are in the interests of the Community.

Mr. Robertson: The hon. Gentleman and I have attended many of these debates before. I am sorry if he regards my comments on his candidature against the Prime Minister as anything other than serious. We have made our position clear. We would use the veto constructively and our intention would be to establish a consensus in Europe. The Government's problem is that they are not interested in consensus even when other Governments are willing—as they have shown under the social charter negotiations—to make substantial concessions towards them. I thought that the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) and I stood side by side on that. Presumably that would be one of his central planks if—in the unlikely event—he was to be the challenger to the Prime Ministership. He may persuade her to convince him not to stand. She may change her mind.

As the Prime Minister sends this week's Chancellor of the Exchequer to Brussels to sell the hand-made competing currency idea cobbled together quickly by the last Chancellor, the Chancellor knows that his idea can work —if it works at all—only to the advantage of the strongest currency in the Community—the deutschmark. It will work only if we are full members of the exchange rate mechanism. The Prime Minister cannot swallow that idea despite the commitments she and her Ministers have solemnly and regularly given on that subject.

The Prime Minister's baggage that she will transport to France this weekend will include the same old-fashioned, out-moded prejudices that will not let her escape from the cold war time warp that she inhabits. That blend of nostalgia for the special relationship with Ronald Reagan, combined with a little England nationalism, is as useful as the abacus in a computer world. The Prime Minister remains the high priestess of Balkanisation.

In June, at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, I described the position then as the "bonfire of the certainties". Perhaps now the bonfire is bordering on a forest fire. Like a few other politicians, the Prime Minister looks on transfixed as the old, comfortable post-war structures lie in the rubble of the Berlin wall. She, and they, seem bewildered, almost like the guards on the Berlin wall, to be without the enemy they have planned and plotted about for 40 years. Well, those relics had better wake up soon, read the papers and the speeches and follow the street politics——

Mr. Nicholas Winterton (Macclesfield): Who wrote it?

Mr. Robertson: It is obvious that the hon. Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Winterton), who has come in late as usual is making a characteristic contribution to a serious subject. If he and the Prime Minister were to look at the politics of the streets in eastern Europe, even they would have to come to terms with the realities. If they delay in doing so, they may give birth to the very forces about which they so solemnly warn us.

There is however a positive agenda for the European Community. On security, we must reassure the Soviet Union, whose leader President Gorbachev has been the visionary driving force behind the dash for democracy. The absurd and incredible attempt to claim credit for the collapse of Communism by the disciples of Thatcherism is as unhelpful as it is shamelessly dishonest.

The Warsaw pact and NATO must get together quickly to start work on a new order in Europe and the world with much lower levels of troops and weapons to reflect the new circumstances. Modernisation of short-range nuclear forces is now a military irrelevance and a political impossiblity.

On economics, there must be a major western European aid programme to the new democracies, linked to reconstruction and the development of pluralist structures. however, that will require resources and someone willing to pay for them. Trade access will also be an essential requirement if the economies of those countries are to perform and deliver the prosperity which alone will protect democracy. If that means new imports from the Eastern bloc—for example of food and textiles—who will pay for the effect on our industries? I am sure that the Minister will agree that those issues are not academic but issues that the whole Community will have to face and may start facing this weekend.

On the political front, Britain and the Community must —as I said before—examine the way in which a framework can be created to include the non-European Community nations. At this point we have to ask precisely what the Prime Minister meant on Monday night at the Lord Mayor's banquet when she talked about the new forms of association. In the treaty of Rome there is a precise

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definition of associate status within the Community. Her amazing linkage with Turkey, which has apparently frightened the living daylights out of the Foreign Office, gives a new meaning to the suggestion that she made on Monday night. Is she advocating associate status for the eastern European nations in accordance with the treaty of Rome?

Mr. Maude: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that Turkey has an association agreement with the Community already?

Mr. Robertson: Of course I am. That is not the question. The question is whether the Prime Minister is proposing for the eastern European countries exactly the same association agreement that is enjoyed by Turkey. It was the Prime Minister who raised the comparison with Turkey in the answers she gave at Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday. Instead of asking me questions it would be helpful if the Minister could answer the question. Is that what she means? I will gladly give way to the Minister. Does he not know? Was it just a clever phrase dreamt up for the Mansion house speech and then the error compounded by a loose phrase thrown away at Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday? The Minister's silence tends to suggest that my analysis is probably true. It would be interesting to know whether the Foreign Office agrees with the new policy. Will it apply to the GDR, Hungary and Poland? And what about the others?

Mr. Maude: The hon. Gentleman dignified his remarks with the title "analysis". He does himself something more than justice. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was referring to new forms of association. That goes on all the time. There are co-operation agreements with a number of countries outside the Community. There is an association agreement with Turkey. I said that we are considering a new form of association with the EFTA countries. There is nothing sinister about that. The Community ought to be looking at new forms of association and it is doing so all the time.

Mr. Robertson: We say that the link with Turkey at Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday was a loose expression and meaningless in that context. Turkey's relationship with the Community is rooted in treaty law. It is not some form of convenient, new association, although the link was designed to gain applause on Monday night at the Mansion house. We have to go beyond loose phraseology and provide real help so that the economies of these countries can be rebuilt. We have already started, in a limited way, to give real help in building parliamentary and party institutions in those countries. We have acquired unique expertise. The work that has already been done this year by the Great Britain-East Europe centre and other organisations in bringing Polish, Hungarian and other parliamentarians to this country has already produced enormous dividends.

Why do we not also ensure that English language teaching is at the heart of our help for these countries? Financial help has been ruled out, but it would be one of the simplest ways to help and extend our future influence.

We must also keep in perspective obsessive speculation about a united Germany. Such an eventuality would require four-power agreement. It would also require an implicit acceptance of the GDR's Communist party propaganda: that an independent GDR's only raison d'etre is its ideological identity. If the East German people eventually make the choice for reunification—and they have been denied any choice of any kind for 56 years—then so be it. They will have to do so, conscious of the wider implications at the time.

We might do better to consider the economic power of such a Germany rather than its potential military might, which is largely mythical. Beware the second Japan, not the fourth Reich. On this issue the Prime Minister would be wise to read the advice of Sir Nicholas Henderson, a very distinguished diplomat, a former ambassador to Washington and an adviser to the Prime Minister. In yesterday's *Evening Standard* he said:

> "Those who insist on emphasising the nation state should not be entitled to complain if one of the most powerful nation states were to act increasingly according to its own national interests."

Perhaps one consequence of the present gale force change in our continent is that in place of the German question will appear the British question.

On the western fringes of a Europe that is looking east for security and trade and represented by a divided Government who abroad leave us out of the mainstream, marginalised and for ever tilting at windmills as they become increasingly beleaguered at home, what influence can we positively have on the recarving of a new European identity? The hard fact is that we need a new Government who will have the vision that the new world demands and that the British people expect.

5.53 pm

Mr. David Howell (Guildford): The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) began his speech with some good points, but I hope that he will not mind if I say that the centre of his speech seems to have been invaded by a word processor. He will have to accept that my mind was not captured by every nuance and phrase in his speech. Nevertheless, he agreed with my hon. Friend the Minister of State that we are holding the debate in the shadow of momentous events. We can see their origin long before the White Paper period that we are examining—the first six months of this year. They lie in the amazing process of liberalisation throughout central and eastern Europe. My hon. Friend the Minister of State was right when he said that fundamental questions had been raised and that we must re-examine where we stand and the way in which we want the European Community and the rest of Europe to develop.

We have now enjoyed the longest period of peace in European history since the very concept of Europe was invented. We have had peace for 44 years. On this side of what was the iron curtain, now crumbling, there are parliamentary democracies of one sort or another. Western Europe is engaged in building the largest single market in the entire planet. It is a massive creation, involving herculean work and effort. In itself that is enough to occupy business men, diplomats, politicians and law makers for a long time ahead. That is the position now, and a very incredible one it is. The question is, where do we go from here?

There are three points of view about the next moves in the European Community. Some of those points were referred to by the Minister of State in his very lucid opening speech. The first—what might be described as the

Delors-Mitterrand camp—argues for acceleration now of the process of European integration. Members of that camp say that history must be speeded up. It is essential, they argue, that European union should be moved forward in double quick time so as to lock in West Germany. That argument was used long before the dancing on the wall and its tearing down at the weekend. That would prevent the Federal Republic of Germany—the most powerful European economy, even as it stands—from being attracted towards its cousins in East Germany and towards eastern Europe generally, where historically many of its interests lie.

To that end we are told that we must move on beyond the single market—never mind that we have not yet achieved it—to the creation of an integrated monetary union with centralised institutions, including the establishment of a central bank. We are also told that there must be an intergovernmental conference that ought to turn its mind not merely towards the creation of these new institutions but towards the creation of new treaties and, in turn, further new institutions to control and balance the new institutions that are already proposed. That must be done, we are told, in the name of an advance towards the kind of federal Europe which, it is said, the founders of Europe had in mind. I am not sure whether, if one examined the sayings of Jean Monnet and others, that is what they had in mind, but that is what is now proposed. That is one point of view. I shall return in a few moments to its validity and worth because we ought to examine it with great care and reservation.

The second point of view which could be adopted—some of my hon. Friends may well take it in view of what has been going on in the Community during the last six months—relates to the word "Resist" that is stamped on the bottom of ministerial briefs when awkward amendments are being pressed. The Minister, it is said, would be well advised to resist. We are left on our own. We have to grow our own wings and devise our own devices about how to resist and about how to say no in a way that does not leave us looking too exhausted and isolated. Certain hon. Members may be inclined to adopt that point of view and to dig in and resist.

The third point of view is the one that I sense, from what my hon. Friend the Minister of State has said, the Government are moving towards: a recognition that the process of creating a European union of great power, strength and influence is irreversible—to use President Bush's word about what is happening in eastern Europe in another context—and that we in this island, a powerful, central and historic part of Europe, must work towards shaping and building that union with all the common sense, practicality, energy and genius that we have used down the centuries in the same cause.

We need to shape our endeavours and to decide that we are moving towards and wish to build a European union shaped in our way and our style. That is very much better than digging in and saying that we are against all forms of monetary and political union. That was a stance of weakness whereby events were bound to bypass us, and were beginning to do so. I am glad that there has been a clear change of emphasis.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that his third option could include a pan-European approach? In the new, totally different circumstances, the emerging democracies of eastern Europe may wish to adopt a different characteristic of private and public endeavour which is not possible in Britain or in the European Community. Is it not possible in future to widen that option to create a pan-European association of states, if not a union, which would incorporate the emerging democracies which the arrangement of the treaties would not allow at the moment?

Mr. Howell: I shall move on to my own preferred option and suggest to the hon. Gentleman, who follows these matters with vast expertise, how best the emerging free republics of east and central Europe can fit into that scheme. We have to consider that very carefully.

I shall now explain the characteristics that I should like to see in the process of European union to which my right hon. and hon. Friends are turning their energies and efforts most constructively.

First, it should be an evolutionary process. That is reflected in the excellent paper by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the processes of monetary convergence in the European Community, emphasising the common sense and practicality embodied in stage one of the Delors report and avoiding the pyramid building and the creation of institutions, before defining their purpose, in stages two and three. In Britain we do not like, and need not be ashamed of disliking, the creation of institutions before working out their common and comfortable purposes. Stages two and three of the Delors report contain absurdities which common sense and realistic people throughout the community are beginning to recognise.

The same applies to social policy. Like other hon. Members, I see no need for that elaborate piece of rhetoric, the social charter. Although I am often in sympathy with my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) on European matters, it is not correct that the preamble to the Single European Act contains a commitment to the social charter. The hon. Member for Hamilton was also wrong about that. It contains a commitment to the charter of the Council of Europe, a very different document from the extraordinary social charter. If the hon. Member for Hamilton checks the preamble to the Single European Act he will see that.

The social charter arises from a reference by the Commission to a body called the Economic and Social Committee in Brussels. It is a curious body that has existed for a long time. It has its own mini-Parliament in Brussels and is a product of the corporatist thinking of the 1960s. That is why the social charter contains talk about social partners and economies being run solely by employers, trade unions and officials. Rather comically, it completely ignores the fact that nowadays most people are not in trade unions and we have completely new labour market conditions. I understand that in France membership of trade unions is down to 12 per cent. It is somewhat higher here, but it is shrinking. I am not saying that that is a good or a bad thing, but the modern labour market is not suitable for massive trade union organisation, as employment patterns are far more flexible. That is why the social charter is such an absurd and dated document, dripping with the illusions of the 1960s and 1970s which dragged Britain to the brink of bankruptcy, and I want no part of it.

Mr. Robertson: I remind the right hon. Gentleman that the Commission's thinking on the social charter derives

[Mr. Robertson]

from the social charter of the Council of Europe. Conservative Members cannot possibly get away with all that abuse of corporatist thinking. If the social charter is corporatist thinking, how is it that the countries that support it most strongly have performance rates so considerably in excess of ours?

Mr. Howell: I do not think that support for it is that strong. It is rather perfunctory and it is beginning to give way under the logic of my right hon. and hon. Friends. The hon. Gentleman must accept that the origins of the document are in the work of the Economic and Social Committee. Mr. Jacques Delors told me that he had made that reference and that is where he said it came from. I must go by his authority on the matter.

Mr. Dykes: I am sure that the British members of the Economic and Social Committee would be interested in my right hon. Friend's comment that that body is corporatist and out of date. It performs a very useful function and I do not think that there is any shame in acknowledging the peace of social partners in a socially harmonious society. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the preamble to the Single European Act—if my memory serves me right as I do not have a copy with me—contains an equal reference to six broad areas of Community objectives in achieving union: economic and monetary union, the internal market—I agree that there is argument about the language used and the meaning of the wording—economic and social cohesion and a number of others that I do not recall at the moment? It is not true that the Single European Act identifies the single European market as a priority area.

Mr. Howell: There is argument about that, and if my hon. Friend checks, he will find that I am right.

As for the members of the Economic and Social Committee, my hon. Friend is quite right that one is bound to offend someone. I have acquaintances and colleagues who have done excellent work for that body in the past. But it is a body built around the concept of social partners, and the information-intensive economies of the 1990s are no longer organised in that way. Without any criticism of the people who work very hard in the Economic and Social Committee, I believe that we should think again about the fundamental ideas behind that structure. That is my first principle.

Secondly, the Europe of the future will have to be firmly rooted in nation states. The nation state remains the fundamental unit of politics. We are involved in a ridiculous debate about whether nation states are part of the Europe of the future. But if there were no nation states and western Europe was one great federal superstate, we would have to reinvent nation states for the sensible management and organisation of a vast continent of varied cultures, legislative and administrative areas and approaches to public affairs. Nations would have to be reinvented as they are extremely well-rooted and effective and are appropriately scaled organisations for managing the 1990s. The idea of federal pyramid building belonged to an age of centralism that has faded away. We have to consider how we can appropriately and usefully decentralise or maintain at a human scale level the administration, the law-giving and the conduct of public affairs of different groups of people formed into the ancient nations.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the right hon. Gentleman think that the United Kingdom is a nation state or a state composed of nations?

Mr. Howell: The hon. Gentleman is tempting me into other areas. For the purpose of my speech, I regard the United Kingdom as an ancient nation state, but I realise that I am treading on great sensitivities for the hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Sillars) who sits behind the hon. Gentleman. Nevertheless, they must admit the validity of what I am saying.

I must tell those who are concerned about the debate in the Community that began six months ago and is still taking place, about whether there is a challenge to the nation state, that that is an absurd worry. The nation state is, and remains, the most fundamental unit. From the idea of ancient nation states, the new Europe of the 1990s will emerge. What will be its structure? Do we have words to describe it yet? Can we describe it only in negative terms by saying that we do not like federalism?

We need not rest on those negative concepts alone. We should quite readily be prepared to embrace the noble, ancient and highly successful concept of a confederation of free states. Some of the most remarkably successful and permanent unions and alliances of states have been confederations in the past. I have no difficulty in foreseeing our Europe develop as a great and permanent union or confederation, as there have been confederations in the past.

I do not want to dispense tedious history lessons, but hon. Members should consider the example of our American friends, who are inclined to ask why we have not yet become a united states of Europe. We have to concede to them, "Your confederacy backed a losing cause and was on the wrong side." However, if one studies its structure, one finds that it was a remarkable institution, as were confederations before it. We should not apologise for saying that this is the vision that we have for the Europe that we are now building.

I am particularly in favour of that because it fulfils other conditions. What we build in Europe should be practical and useful; it should not be developed for reasons of broad theory and generality, which have no solid grounds. That is why I find the concept of subsidiarity valuable. It is a little difficult to understand, it is a political concept and it has no legal definition. If translated rigorously, it is a recipe that says, "Let things be done at nation state level which can most usefully be done at that level, but let things be done collectively that can more effectively, efficiently and necessarily only be done at the supra-national level." Let us stick with the word "subsidiarity", but let us see whether, as Anglo-Saxons, we can invent better words to describe it. One thinks of phrases such as the principle of the "least degree of collectivisation or centralisation necessary". We must apply our minds to show that we can devise a much more effective and well-articulated Europe than the old federal idea.

The Europe that we are constructing must think in terms of openness and expansion—not expansion in the old military sense, but expansion in embracing other republics and nations as they liberalise, become market

economies and form price structures and therefore become able to enter into the international trading system. That is not yet the case in Poland, although it may become so, or in Hungary and it is certainly not the case in East Germany. In all three countries, there are aspirations that this should become the way of things. Indeed, we may see those aspirations develop in Czechoslovakia at any moment. As they do, collectively in western Europe and through individual programmes—which must be co-ordinated because we do not want confusion or a muddle because everyone has their own bilateral programmes for a particular country—we should develop means of reinforcing the processes by which those countries become market economies.

Those means are not straightforward. It is not a question of rushing with massive official aid to those countries, because there are enormous difficulties in foreseeing how it could be connected with their economies as they currently stand. In all cases, radical currency reform is necessary. We shall have to tune carefully and sensitively our support and aid to ensure that Governments pushing through highly unpopular currency reforms, which will involve falling living standards and social pressures, are given support in the short term, before they get into their medium-term stride and we begin to see the attractions of inward investment, joint ventures and the driving force of wealth creation, which of course comes from the private sector.

Against that background, the processes of reunification between East and West Germany will have to move slowly. Indeed, as some Germans are wisely suggesting, they perhaps should be put aside almost indefinitely. It can be argued that the Federal Republic of Germany has been one of the most highly successful and mature post-war states. It has been enormously prosperous, has had amazingly balanced politics and has commendably sought to fulfil its role in the post-war world despite the enormous difficulties of the past. The current prospects for the Federal Republic must be very good indeed.

It is legitimate to ask why, therefore, some of our West German friends believe that they would be better off if they were to embrace the DDR in a greater Germany. It is not our place to dictate to the Germans whether they should reunify or not, but it should be our aim at least to point out to our German friends that, in terms of their prosperity and freedom, they would probably do far better to think of two republics, both liberalising and developing as market economies with intimate and friendly relations but, nevertheless, remaining as two republics for some time.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the difficulty is that if the result of free elections is a demand by East Germans for reunification, Britain and any one else should not stand in their way?

Mr. Howell: That is right. It is not our place to stand in the way, but it is at least reasonable for us as friends to point out to two cool and sensible heads—which certainly exist in the Federal Republic and the DDR—that in terms of the broader scene of a free Europe, free states and a free confederation, they may be better off keeping, for the foreseeable future, two separate republics rather than joining as one giant united republic of Germany of 80 million people. As a friend, that is all I suggest we should point out to our German colleagues, but my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) is right to say that we have no right or locus to urge that unity be resisted if that is what free elections, free will and self-determination drive Germany towards. I am saying only that they would be better not to reunify with the East.

I wish to comment on the points made by my hon. Friend the Minister and the hon. Member for Hamilton about how we further help the eastern and central European economies. I do not believe that early on we should rush at those emerging market economies with massive official aid. We must help them through the difficult winter ahead and devise every conceivable detailed means by which they can build market economies, which means assistance with managerial, financial, entrepreneurial, advertising and market skills and using our resources carefully to promote those programmes.

The hon. Member for Hamilton seemed to deride the idea of £25 million at £5 million a year. If he thinks about it, in this context, that is quite a big programme for getting going the first management teams and for helping universities in Poland to begin to send people here to learn management skills. The administration of this programme, which may not sound vast in the language that we use of hundreds of millions of pounds, requires an enormous amount of administration and is a good, sensible and practical start. Nothing would be worse than throwing hundreds of millions of pounds at those countries when the mechanisms by which the money can be usefully spent on creating the sinews of a market economy simply are not present.

My message to my hon. Friend the Minister is that he is right to proceed carefully. He should leave Poland, Hungary—perhaps Czechoslovakia tomorrow and the emerging DDR as it liberalises—in no doubt that we are determined to offer practical help, and in the long term to help them to create the conditions in which private investment can begin to pour into these areas, thereby enabling them to use their skills, upgrade their technical knowledge, build on the vast number of educated people in eastern Europe, with all their wonderful talents and original design skills, thus will we create the great confederation of Europe which will be—I want to try to avoid triumphalism—one of the most powerful, prosperous, free and democratic areas on the planet.

6.19 pm

Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli): By their very nature, debates on White Papers tend to be wide ranging. Much of a White Paper is often out of date by the time we can debate it. I shall try to choose my texts from a narrow context and speak about European monetary union, which is mentioned on page 7 of the document, linking it to East-West relations, especially in respect of eastern Europe, which is dealt with briefly on page 27.

I do not think that, even before the events in eastern Europe and the momentous events in East Germany over the past week, there was much support in the House for the Delors plan. The right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) has echoed the misgivings about the plan. Stage 1 seems innocuous, but perhaps when one studies it, one sees that it is not quite that innocuous. There is little support in the House for stages 2 and 3. I should have thought that, given the upheavals that have taken place, the best course is to put stages 2 and 3 on the back burner until we have

[Mr. Denzil Davies]

worked out a stable basis for the changes that are taking place in eastern Europe—perhaps we should now call it central Europe.

My fundamental objections to stages 2 and 3 of European monetary union are fairly obvious to any hon. Member. The proposals involve handing over control of monetary policy, which means interest rates. They affect the private and public sectors and the Government's ability to fund public expenditure. The proposals involve handing over control of a major part of the economy to a body that is not accountable to anyone. It is not accountable to the House, the British Government—whatever party is in government—the British people or the electorate, whether in Britain or in western Europe.

Power is being handed over to central bankers, whether British, European, or a mixture of both. To paraphrase an expression used a few weeks ago, bankers may advise but Ministers have to decide. That is the basis on which we run our economic policy. Ministers are responsible to the House and the electorate. The idea that central bankers, however good they may be—although their advice is valuable, sometimes it must be turned down—can run huge sections of our economy is anathema to most of us. It is ironic that the EEC calls, quite rightly, for free elections in eastern Europe, yet the European Commission and Mr. Delors want to shift huge sections of economic power towards a body that can operate whether or not there are elections. We are rightly calling for the exercise of democratic control and for freedom in eastern Europe.

The Delors plan is not just about economic and monetary union. It is no secret that the plan was about controlling West Germany. The French, like most people, are worried about the power and strength of the German economy and reunification, which is understandable. The French often come up with clever theories which will not work in practice. The idea is that somehow West Germany can be locked into western Europe by a currency union, so the Germans will not look to the East and will not try to dominate it or produce as they are entitled to do. That is complete nonsense. The deutschmark is a strong currency, but the German economy is strong because the Germans produce goods and their industry is powerful. Whatever kind of union exists in western Europe, that will still happen. West Germany cannot be tied in a straitjacket that constrains and limits its power.

Even before the upheavals of the past few weeks and months in eastern Europe, the West German economy was looking east because of its geographical position, its historical ties and its power. There have been rapid changes, and West Germany will certainly look much more to the east because of the events of the past six months. Whether reunification occurs or not, before long East Germany will virtually cease to exist as an independent economic entity. The "ostmark" cannot compete with the deutschmark—the deutschmark would gobble it up. West Germany will invest considerably in East Germany, Hungary and perhaps Poland, eventually extending its investments to parts of the Soviet Union, especially the Baltic states. There is bound to be not only a western deutschmark zone but an eastern deutschmark zone, stretching from Berlin, through the Ukraine, to the Baltic states.

Most people do not want that to happen. I mean no disrespect to the West Germans. They work hard, they have a thriving economy, and they make things. I wish that the British economy were more similar to the West German economy in those respects. Those little financial wheezes of Mr. Delors will be swept away by the deutschmark and German economic power. We need not a currency union but a new basic structure in Europe to maintain stability and stop uncertainty. It will not be easy to achieve that.

I have a suggestion, which has been made also by members of the West German Social Democratic party and others. Perhaps the allied powers—the powers of Potsdam, plus perhaps France—should think about getting together and drawing up two treaties, one with each part of Germany. Obviously, before that happens, there must be free elections in the German Democratic Republic. I would not be surprised if those free elections take place fairly quickly, partly because of pressure from the population and partly because it is in the interests of the Socialist Unity party to go to the electorate as quickly as it can before other political parties can organise.

The SUP's roots are deep. The party goes back long before Stalin and Hitler. That is why it is no surprise to me that the East Germans, one after the other, talk about social democracy and Socialism. That is not just the voice of propaganda or because they have been brainwashed over the past 30 or 40 years. We must be aware of the deep traditions—many of them Marxist, but honourable, traditions—in that part of the world. If free elections are held, the allied powers should think about negotiating two treaties—one with East Germany and one with West Germany.

No doubt, the treaties will say many things, but they would have to deal with two points. First, a treaty should legitimise the East German state after free elections, whether the Socialist Unity party or the New Forum wins the elections. I believe that we have not recognised the East German state. The right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell), who is the Chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, will no doubt correct me if I am wrong. I believe that there has been no de jure recognition and that there is still only de facto recognition. However, many countries do not recognise East Germany. There was once no de facto recognition and people from East Germany could not travel to the West because their passports were not recognised. There was then a long period of de facto recognition and I do not know whether it has now become de jure recognition.

Mr. Robertson: It has.

Mr. Davies: That must be enshrined in a treaty with the East German state which will legitimise it, and will legitimise East Berlin as the capital of the East German state.

Secondly, the treaties should finally establish the existing borders in Europe as the borders of the two Germanies in terms of their relationships with their neighbours. That has never been done. The West German Basic Law says clearly, as many hon. Members know well, that legally there is only one Germany. The borders are the borders of 1937 and that was confirmed by a decision of the federal constitutional court some years ago.

Most West Germans do not care about the Basic Law —I imagine that they do not even think about it—but

Germany's neighbours perhaps do. The Poles are concerned about it and the Soviet Union may be concerned. Let us end the farce and the fiction. Let us enshrine the existing borders of the two Germanies in a treaty made between the allied powers and Germany.

The hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) said in an intervention in the speech of the right hon. Member for Guildford that if the Germans voted for unification, they should be allowed to carry it out. I do not agree. The principle of self-determination does not go as far as throwing overboard the Yalta-Potsdam settlement. It cannot go that far for obvious reasons which I thought that all hon. Members would see.

Sir Russell Johnston: That is an incredible statement. The right hon. Gentleman seems to be saying that the Germans do not have the right to decide what they want for themselves. That is a profoundly undemocratic remark.

Mr. Davies: Mr. Gorbachev made it clear the other day that he was happy to see the wall coming down.

Sir Russell Johnston: Mr. Gorbachev!

Mr. Davies: It is all very well for the hon. Gentleman to say that. Mr. Gorbachev is the leader of the geographically largest country in Europe which suffered the loss of almost 20 million people in the last war. Mr. Gorbachev made it clear that the wall should come down and that there should be free elections, even though the Communist party might lose, but that there should be no reunification. Mr. Shevardnadze said the same. Is the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) suggesting that if the East German electorate votes for reunification, we should let it happen despite the problems in central and eastern Europe and the effect it would have on the Poles, who are struggling to reconstruct their economy? That makes no sense.

Mr. Dykes: The right hon. Gentleman said only a few years ago that 25 per cent. of the people of France were in agriculture so I take everything he says with a pinch of salt. Was the implication of his remark about Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Shevardnadze that reunification was not on the agenda now?

Mr. Davies: It is not on the agenda now, but perhaps the Soviet Union will change its mind in future. However, if the Soviet Union does not change its mind, the idea that the East German people can vote and overthrow the post-war settlement is dangerous.

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): Does the right hon. Gentleman not see that to deny the German people of East and West the right to unite, if that is their democratic will, would give them a considerable grievance and that grievance would be almost calculated to fan the flames of German nationalism?

Mr. Davies: Is the hon. Gentleman saying that if they vote for reunification, it should happen?

Mr. Irvine: Yes.

Mr. Davies: I disagree. It would be profoundly dangerous and irresponsible if that idea were accepted.

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): Does the right hon. Gentleman understand the implication of what he is saying? Is he saying that if the peoples of East Germany and West Germany have free elections and vote for reunification, not only should it not happen, but people should act to prevent it from happening? Is he saying that we should stand by and welcome, as he appears to do, intervention by the Soviet Union in that respect? That would be an incredible statement.

Mr. Davies: I am saying that the two treaties with the two Germanies should make it absolutely clear that there would be treaty obligations on both those countries. Treaties have to be observed and I should have thought that most people would wish those treaties to be observed.

We need to legitimise the present situation. Apart from a few Conservative Members, nobody wants German reunification and we should make that clear. We are told that neither West Germany nor East Germany wants reunification. Let us, therefore, legitimise the existing borders of the two Germanies so that they can operate side by side as democratic states. If East Germany wants to apply to join the European Community, that matter can be considered. If it wants associate membership, that, too, can be considered. However, until East Germany is legitimised as a state, such matters cannot be considered at all. Instead of going down the blind alley of currency reform, let us think about a more stable structure in Europe so that Germany's neighbours can be reassured and will not be afraid that at some time in the future, reunification will damage and jeopardise them.

6.35 pm

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): One of the most significant events that occurred recently when Chancellor Kohl visited the Berlin wall was the hostile reaction he received from the ordinary people of the German Democratic Republic. The boos and catcalls that he received when putting forward his thoughts on reunification spoke volumes for the difficulties that he is about to experience in relation to the rest of Europe when he goes to the meeting on Saturday, and when he attends the summit on 8 December.

That reception may have come as a surprise in the light of the West German Basic Law, to which the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) has just referred. The reason he received that reaction was that the people were calling not for reunification, but for democracy. They have sought freedom of choice and they will exercise that freedom of choice in their own way. I have watched most of the television programmes over the past few days and it has become increasingly clear not only that they insist on exercising that freedom of choice, but that the mayor of West Berlin, Mr. Momper, is clear that it would be extremely difficult for Berlin—or, as we discovered, Bremen, and many of the other cities in West Germany —to absorb reunification if it was followed or preceded by a mass exodus of people. However much the West German economy may wish to absorb the cheap labour and skills of the people of East Germany, the facilities are not there.

When we go to the Strasbourg summit, there will be a difficulty. On one hand, there is the expression of self-determination which we should like to see carried through in free elections, but on the other hand, Chancellor Kohl in his repetition of the call for reunification combined with a united states of Europe is in a directly contradictory position. To call for a United States of Europe with its federal connotations would be effectively to deny self-determination to the countries that

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already have established democracies. That is a contradiction of the concept of self-determination and a dilemma for the German people.

I dealt with some aspects of federalism in my speech on 18 May, and I need not go into that again now, except to refer to the problems that we face because of the immense speed with which we are being pressed towards federalism —by President Mitterrand on 17 October and by M. Delors on 12 October, for example—and the increasing pressure that is being placed on us in the run-up to the December summit. They seem to be ignoring the fact that many of the European electorates—and indeed, national Parliaments—have not been fully informed or asked whether they want a federal system or not. More effort should be made not only to inform the electorate in this country but to allow and encourage electorates in other European countries to form a measured opinion.

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the main reasons why the French are keen to proceed extremely quickly to some form of European unification—to a federal Europe—is that they fear the power of Germany and the reunification of Germany? One way of preventing their fears from becoming reality is, they believe, to lock West Germany into a federal Europe as fast as possible—with all the loss of sovereignty that that would entail for Germany, as for Britain.

Mr. Cash: My hon. Friend has anticipated my argument. I had intended to conclude my point by referring to Disraeli's famous expression, "Trust the people." It is essential that the views of the people should be properly canvassed before a step of such immense importance is taken.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) and others argue that we should follow the policy advanced by Konrad Adenauer, who said that the way to preserve stability in Europe and to solve the German question would be to bind Germany into a federal Europe. Such sentiments have been endorsed by Sir Leon Brittan and others, who exhort us to a central bank and a single currency, which, in my view, amount to the same thing. Others press us to accept stages 2 and 3 of Delors and others a lesser plan.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford suggested a form of confederation. Whichever plan is adopted, it will contain the ingredients of political unity. In fairness to my right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford, I think that he came pretty close to suggesting that he could envisage such a form of government. The difficulty is that if we adopt such a policy, we shall effectively be locking ourselves into a legal order. I voted for the Single European Act, and I repeat that I would do so again. We may have decided to accept majority voting but that does not necessarily imply an automatic progression towards a federal—or confederal—system. If we espouse such a policy we shall lock ourselves into the DNA of the European Community and will not then be able to escape.

An economic difficulty arises. People say that we must bind ourselves and West Germany into a federal system to prevent the domination by Germany of the rest of Europe. But by entrenching that same economic strength within a federal Europe, we shall achieve the same result without securing the balance of power that would result were we to proceed with the voluntary agreement of nation states. That represents a vital difference. Moreover, such a move excludes the possibility of the wider liberalised Europe at which we are also aiming in what my right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford referred to as "the evolutionary approach". I prefer to refer to "organic growth" because that implies the sentiments that lay at the heart of the thinking of Edmund Burke and others like him when these matters were last being considered several centuries ago.

It seems to me that we are being accused of breaking rules, when, as my hon. Friend the Minister pointed out, we have been exceptionally good at complying with the rules of the Community. We are also being accused—this is the ultimate irony—of not complying with rules that have not yet been created. There is no definition of economic and monetary union and the concept of federal Europe has been no more than outlined in stages 2 and 3 of Delors. It is not part of a treaty that we have signed. It is not part of any structure to which we have an obligation to subscribe. It is not an inevitable progression from what has gone before. If we accepted that concept, we could say goodbye to Westminster and, in any real sense, to our forms of government. That is what worries me.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford referred in his interesting speech to the notion of subsidiarity. It is a matter of fact and of law that in the context of a federal system the distribution and allocation of functions at the macro level, including economic and monetary union, and the paraphernalia that goes with it —the binding rules, the determination of budget deficit, the penalties that would be imposed and the methods by which to impose them—would leave institutions at the lower level, including the United Kingdom Parliament with next to nothing.

I understood from the debate last Thursday that the House as a whole rejected stages 2 and 3 of Delors. If we reject them, we cannot follow a route that implies a degree of federalism and is implied in the notion of confederation, in the legal sense, to which my right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford referred.

I remain deeply concerned about the question of the dominant position of Germany within Europe. I regard the German people as friends and colleagues. It is nevertheless essential that we ask them to consider the path that they are constructing by the reassertiveness of their policies—shown, for example, in the speech of Mr. Genscher on 7 May, in subsequent speeches by Chancellor Kohl and in particular by the paper that was recently produced by Mr. Prill and Mr. Mertes, which suggests the path forward that Germany should take within Europe. That paper suggests a series of options that are highly dangerous in terms of the tensions that could develop if the German economy and the German political system became over-dominant rather than merely pre-eminent within the European Community.

A great deal is at stake. We must understand the position taken by France in relation to Germany in the light of the fact that 20 per cent. of French imports and exports are dependent on the German economy. Furthermore, the French have effectively surrendered to the deutschmark. That is the crucial point. We are determined to maintain our independence and ensure that we do not surrender to the deutschmark.

The West German economy has been reconstructed since 1945. We have reconstructed only since 1979 and the implications were not seen until 1984 or 1985. We need time and space. With or without reunification the Germans should be thinking hard about the necessity of maintaining the democracy that is intherent in our Parliament and to ensure that we maintain our independence. A member of the French National Assembly told me in the House only last week that the rest of Europe looks to Westminster for democracy. We forget that at our peril.

We have fought for several decades to preserve our democracy. It is important that we sustain it into the future. We face a crucial decision which we will have to take sooner than we would like. We must take it some time in the next 18 months and it will have to be faced on 8 December. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has staked out the case for Britain which has been endorsed by the United Kingdom Parliament. We will not be rushed into federalism. That would involve serious dangers for us, for Europe as a whole and also for the democracy of people in western Europe and in eastern Europe. We must not let those people down.

6.52 pm

Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber): I want to refer to several of the points made by the hon. Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash). I found the whole slant of his observations negative, depressing and old-fashioned. Nothing makes me more weary than to be told how much better we are than everyone else and how everyone else looks up to us. Sadly, I am afraid that that is a profound illusion.

The House of Commons is a very funny place. Last weekend saw the most glorious and marvellous affirmation of freedom since before the iron curtain dropped. There was so much joy along the Berlin wall and there was that fantastic street party on the Kurfurstendam. In the fact of all that, how do we react? There is little excitement. I hear that we must proceed slowly and have time and space. We must be very careful. Indeed, the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell), the Chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, said, "We must look with great care"; he then paused and said, "and reservation." That means that he is against it.

Mr. David Howell: That really is an out-of-context reinterpretation of my remarks. If the hon. Gentleman checks *Hansard*, he will find that I was referring to the emotion that is being generated for the early reunification of the two Germanies. That is where I said that care is needed. I was only echoing the common-sense views expressed by many West Germans, East Germans and people in the other capitals of Europe.

Sir Russell Johnston: I was not quoting the right hon. Gentleman out of context. I know that he believes that his view is common sense. He also believes that his opinion was cool and sensible. There is no doubt that these incredible events have dominated the debate, and I want to spend some time referring to them.

The hon. Member for Stafford referred to the speeches made by Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Chancellor Kohl. I found it a great comfort that Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the Liberal Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, while welcoming the changes in the DDR, stressed that the Federal Republic of Germany remained committed to working towards European union. I was also very pleased that Chancellor Kohl said something very similar in Poland. He said that Germany unification, far from being incompatible with increasing the pace of European unification—to which several hon. Members who have spoken today are opposed—was necessary to its peaceful achievement. I agree with that.

We do not know how long the process will take. No one expected what has happened to happen with such speed. Any relationship which will evolve between the two German states must be firmly rooted in the context of European union. Tim Garton-Ash, the political editor of the *Spectator*, wrote last week:

"If Europe is just a single market, then a Germany of 80 million people, with a GNP twice that of Britain, will dominate it. If Europe is also a single polity, it will not."

That is right on the mark. The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson), quoted from an article by Sir Nicholas Henderson in the *Evening Standard* last night. Sir Nicholas Henderson's article deserves to be quoted a little more extensively than the hon. Member for Hamilton quoted it because Sir Nicholas refers to points about which hon. Members have expressed concern. As everyone has said, Sir Nicholas is a most experienced diplomat and a very wise man—and there are not many people about whom it may reasonably be said that they are wise. Sir Nicholas stated:

"Whatever form unification takes"—

notice that he accepts that it will happen—

"Bonn will surely want the newly-added territory to be fully incorporated into the European Community. This could cause difficulties for Austria, which is already in the waiting room of the Community"—

I doubt whether that is very serious; I do not believe that the DDR can join before then—

"as well as other European countries. But the real problem that could arise would be over the size and weight of an enlarged Germany in the European Community.

A policy of promoting the concept of Europe on the basis of separate states rather than a closer union involving a greater sharing of decision-making would be likely to aggravate this problem."

We know exactly what he means by that. He is talking about the Prime Minister's view.

Mr. Cash: The hon. Gentleman has touched directly on the central theme of my speech. If one were to construct a paper constitution with the power and degree of the Germany economy on the scale that the hon. Gentleman has just described, does he believe that that would soon lead to that paper being discarded in favour of real political and economic power because those who pay the piper call the tune?

Sir Russell Johnston: No, I do not think that, and nor does Sir Nicholas Henderson. Sadly, the hon. Gentleman does not seem to accept a view within the Community that the evolution of a Community based on standards and policies is not related to national attitudes which are more and more out of date.

Sir Nicholas went on to state:

"It will surely be desirable for such a Germany to share as closely as possible in decision-making with its Community partners. Those who insist on emphasising the nation state should not be entitled to complain if one of the most powerful nation states were to act increasingly according to its own national interests."

Contrary to what the hon. Member for Stafford said, I do not agree that that will happen if the Federal Republic

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is integrated. I do not quote opinions out of suspicion or fear of Germany. Many hon. Members have such fears. Democracy is firmly rooted in the Federal Republic. Contrary also to what the hon. Member for Stafford said, I believe it is now a more democratic country than Britain and its society is more open and less repressive and intolerant. Historical national suspicions linger darkly among us. I do not believe that the idealistic approach —I supposed I could be accused of being idealistic—to the development of a federal state in Europe will come about unless Europe includes a fair balance between historical states. One is seeking not to contain Germany but to recognise that if Britain, France or Germany were dominant, it would not be good for the whole. The Delors argument is for our benefit as well as his.

Mr. Janman: I have been listening with fascination to the hon. Gentleman's speech. In essence, is he saying that outside the federal Europe, in a framework which will continue as it is now, the German people are inherently superior to the other peoples of western Europe? Is he saying that a country with even 80 million people will automatically economically out-perform three nation states, including Italy, of 60 million people? Surely the hon. Gentleman's attitude is defeatist. We should be looking to Britain as a nation state and as an economy being able to compete with a country which, pre-unification, had only a few million people and, with unification, is only a quarter or third larger.

Sir Russell Johnston: I do not regard the Germans as inherently superior any more than I regard us as inherently superior. The simple argument is about the political necessity of creating the European Community out of states which are of roughly equivalent size, and therefore which can——

Mr. Janman *rose——*

Sir Russell Johnston: I will not give way. Many hon. Members wish to speak. I am all in favour of giving way, but that is my answer. Despite the fact that the Prime Minister would probably agree with the hon. Gentleman, some powerful voices in the Cabinet do not, and they are increasingly expressing their view.

What is happening in eastern Europe is encouraging and exciting. We will not respond effectively if we stumble on our road to reconciliation. We must provide an opportunity for them to relate to something coherent. Therefore, the road ahead must be to accept that we are to be part of a supranational group which will be federal in some way. Within that group, we will not get everything our own way, but we will get a lot more than we would if we were outside it or if we spoil other countries' efforts to achieve it. We will be able to contribute to change.

The two great parties of this country are divided on this issue. I do not say that happily or even critically: it is a fact. There is a fear of commitment, almost like a child's fear of the dark. Supranational power is suspected as though it were a plot to undermine our standards. There was more than a hint of that in the speech by the hon. Member for Stafford. There is a fear that the fellows across the Channel will undermine our standards and impose unacceptable things on us in some way or another. The Chairman of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs is a languorous chap —decent, but very laid back. He was certainly very laid back today. He gave the impression of the superior Anglo-Saxon who thinks that all those fussy continentals are liable to be strange and misleading, and talked of Delors and Mitterrand as though they were a couple of recalcitrant political schoolboys. That is absurd.

Mr. Cash *rose——*

Sir Russell Johnston: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman in a moment. *[Interruption.]* I apologise to the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow), who seldom intervenes in hon. Members' speeches!

Late on Monday night—not many hon. Members were present—we debated a Commission proposal for a European environmental agency which would try to get common statistical bases for evaluating pollution. It could become more than that. It was a short debate, but it epitomised certain attitudes. The Government were unwilling to accept that even the collection of information about pollution should be other than voluntary. That is rather like saying that criminals should normally voluntarily report their misdemeanours to the local police station. The Labour spokesman spoke vigorously in favour of a British environmental agency which must be independent of Government. When I asked him how, if one accepts that, one can logically reject a European agency independent of countries—I can see no contradiction—he was silent.

One cannot reject it in logic, nor should one fight against an agency which, within the framework of the Commission, the Council and Parliament, would develop and regulate a policy. That is not bureaucracy; it is protecting our environment together. The Prime Minister conjures up a wholly false picture of the Commission seeking to devise a negative plethora of regulations, whereas, by contrast, she and her Government seek to release enterprise and create jobs. One wonders how the Left of the Labour party, which always regarded the Common Market as a capitalist plot, now views this matter.

The social charter is not negative. It is a search for a sensible balance between the release of private initiative and the protection of public well-being. Anybody who objects to the social charter should read John Kenneth Galbraith. I am ashamed that we should be isolated in that search. That is one of the things which the Liberal Democrats would say in the European Parliament if our distorted electoral system did not prevent us from going there.

The reason we do not enter the exchange rate mechanism is not because there is no right time, as we are always being told, but because there is a gut refusal to face up to the fact that the only way forward for us is to accept that our future is within a supranational Europe and to do our best to make it work. There is no difference of view between those on the two Front Benches about whether to join the EMS, which is both a matter of practical value and symbolic importance.

I shall briefly mention the developments in eastern Europe. I have been wanting to say the following for some time and I now have the opportunity: there is one present Member and one former Member of this House whom I would like to be here now. The present Member is the hon. Member for Oldham, Central and Royton (Mr. Lamond), whom I have heard on my car radio in the deep watches of

the night telling me on DDR radio about the excellence of the Honecker regime. He could come along and admit that he was utterly wrong. The other chap is a former Member of Parliament, Mr. Robert Maxwell, who once called Mr. Honecker "the father of the nation". He might use the *Daily Mirror* to say much the same thing. Those people defended the indefensible when it was easy to do so. If Egon Krenz can admit fault, they should also.

What happened in Berlin last weekend was wonderful. However, the problem of shifting economies with subsidised, state-imposed pricing towards liberal, economic systems against a background of economic confusion is enormously difficult. For example, one third of the DDR budget—as I found when I was there last April—goes towards maintaining food and rent prices based on 1949 prices and transport prices based on pre-war prices, not to mention a series of other impossible arrangements. That means that it will be difficult to transfer from that position, which applies to all Eastern bloc countries. The transition must be managed gradually and we must help.

I was sorry that the Minister who introduced this debate said nothing specific on this matter. Perhaps the Minister who winds up will do better. At the summit in Paris this weekend the Community should try to put together a package of credit, and technological and managerial assistance, to help with proposals related to joint ventures and food assistance—particularly to Poland —which they can put to Presidents Bush and Gorbachev when they meet early next year.

It is too soon to talk of associate status for eastern European countries within the European Community, but I hope that the Government are alive to the useful role that the Council of Europe can play in providing a bridge between East and West for information and contact.

I could speak at much greater length and I apologise to Conservative Members; perhaps I have been a bit self-indulgent because there are not many Members present.

I shall conclude by making two points. First, the huge changes in the East which we so enormously welcome will not be confirmed and advanced by the European Community hesitating to seek to weld itself closer together. That suggestion, which was contained in the Prime Minister's Mansion house speech, was wrong. Secondly, we in Britain must finally face up to the fact that our future lies not in clinging to illusory sovereignty, but in committing ourselves wholeheartedly to work with other countries of similar sizes and shared cultures and experiences in the European Community, which will be some kind of federal solution. Let us stop pretending that we can do everything ourselves and are cleverer than everyone else. The future lies in working with others in Europe.

7.13 pm

Mr. Michael Lord (Suffolk, Central): There can be no doubt that recent events in eastern Europe will dramatically change the lives, not only of the people living in the countries directly involved, but, to a considerable extent, the rest of us who live in Europe and even beyond. While I am delighted at the prospect of freedom and democracy spreading eastwards, I urge the greatest possible caution in the period ahead which could well usher in a time of great instability.

I shall briefly consider what is happening and point to an existing stable framework which might be used to enable the changes taking place to proceed in the safest and most orderly way. As a member of the Council of Europe and the Western European Union, I believe that these two organisations are uniquely placed to play a key role in the changing pattern of Europe. I shall explain why later. However, before doing so I shall consider three aspects of the changes now occurring: why they are happening, what uncertainties they will usher in and how we should react.

The first question we must ask is not why the East German people have streamed through the Berlin wall or why democracy is being returned to Poland and Hungary, but why the authorities have allowed it to happen instead of rolling out the tanks, Chinese fashion, as they might have done years ago to quell what was happening. All this must have been sanctioned by Moscow, and again we must ask why.

The high level of military spending in Russia may well place an intolerable burden on its ramshackle economy. There is no doubt that its power is being eroded and its involvement with Afghanistan showed it the folly of following military excursions, and also cost a great deal. There may now exist in Russia a general and genuine desire to live in peace and harmony with the rest of the world. That may be true but, if so, we must again ask why tanks, aircraft and submarines are still being built at a steady and alarming rate.

The Soviet Union's intentions may be totally benign. It is quite reasonable to suppose that it is now prepared to try democracy and capitalism, but the result of the recent actions has been to introduce into Europe the greatest note of uncertainty for 40 years. More potential damage has been done to the western Alliance and NATO by the knocking down of the Berlin wall than Russia's massive armaments programme ever achieved. If the intention was to create uncertainty and a weakening of its opposition, these recent changes could be the most effective offensive Russia has so far launched, without the need so much as to lift a rifle.

As a result of these actions, uncertainty abounds for many good reasons. We do not know the reasoning behind these changes at the highest level. The outcome of the move towards democracy and freedom in the East is still unknown. We do not know why President Gorbachev surfaced in the Soviet Union, what support he currently enjoys and, more important, how long he will remain in office. The role of the European Community in all this is uncertain. There is a very real possibility of the unification of Germany. Most important of all, there is the effect of all this on the Warsaw Pact, NATO and our indispensable American allies.

Tonight is not the time to go into detailed debates about exactly what will happen over the weeks and months ahead. The right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) talked about what hon. Members from both sides of the House wanted to see in Germany. It is not a matter of what any of us want, but of what will happen. If, as many people believe and expect, Germany is reunified—perhaps sooner rather than later—it will clearly be important for that country to be stitched comfortably and happily into the fabric of Europe.

In the midst of all this uncertainty, how should the United Kingdom respond? Our response should take advantage of all that is happening in order to improve the

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freedom, democracy, safety and stability of Europe as a whole, without in the slightest way reducing—except by negotiation and verification—the West's defensive position and watchfulness. What is necessary is a framework, flexible enough to allow beneficial changes to take place but firm enough to provide the stability needed in times of change and perhaps also able to act as a benchmark against which to measure change and judge exactly what adaptations to the existing framework, which has kept the peace for 40 years, are most likely to lead to a more co-operative and secure Europe. I believe that in conjunction with other organisations the Council of Europe and the Western European Union have key roles to play in these matters.

The Council of Europe, uniquely, embraces every democracy in Europe and in a unique breakthrough earlier this year granted Russia, Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia guest status. Those countries now join us at our parliamentary assemblies in Strasbourg and no longer simply observe our proceedings but, in fact, participate in our debates in the Assembly and will increasingly be involved in all aspects of the Council of Europe's work. The House will, I am sure, recall that it was to the Council of Europe that President Gorbachev chose to come earlier this year to make his historic speech about our "common European home".

So, a working forum already exists which will enable discussions to take place between East and West on all these issues in the widest possible European context—a forum in which, as West Germany is already a member, the future of East Germany could most naturally be debated.

The other organisation that surely has a crucial part to play is the Western European Union, which is currently being enlarged to embrace Spain and Portugal and which has in recent years been reactivated and is playing an ever-increasing part in European defence.

It has been suggested that as West Germany is already part of the European Community, East Germany can simply join as well. It is, however, a common market, not a defensive organisation, and while this move may be helpful in many ways, it is clearly not a complete or even adequate answer. The Western European Union, however, which has both West Germany and France as members, and which is entirely concerned with defence, is the obvious organisation to discuss the future position of eastern Germany in military terms.

The fact that the USSR is now able to enter into debates at the Council of Europe must be a help in the whole process, and it is for these reasons that I believe that both the Council of Europe and the Western European Union have vital parts to play in these rapidly changing times.

May I just enter a note of caution on placing too much emphasis on the personality and motives of any particular leader or trying to wish ourselves into a happier, freer Europe, which may still be quite a long way away? In matters of defence, the heart must never be allowed to rule the head. I have already said that none of us knows exactly what reasons lie behind the present situation and it would, in my view, be fatal to build, shape, or even alter, however slightly, our defence policy on the basis of what we guess may or may not be in the minds of other nations' leaders —in Russia or elsewhere. It is rather like expecting the Politburo to agree to disband the Warsaw pact simply because they have come to a unanimous conclusion that our Prime Minister is "a good egg". Our defensive disposition must be totally unchanged by recent events until we see how matters develop. Provided our guard is kept firmly up, we have everything to gain and nothing to lose.

Finally, while the full effects of recent events are unfolding and to ensure that constructive dialogue continues, I very much hope that both the Council of Europe and the Western European Union will be given the maximum encouragement by all Governments concerned to play their part.

7.22 pm

Mr. Gareth Wardell (Gower): I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on developments in the European Community between January and June this year when a total of 410 European documents were deposited in Parliament. It is important to take part in this debate for no less a reason than that many of my constituents seem to believe that 1992 is to be the celebration year of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus and do not seem to realise that 1992 has some important implications for the European scene.

It is tempting to explore the many subjects referred to in the documents, many of which are extremely important, such as the reference to the change in the blood alcohol level that will be brought forward in new directives on the breathalyser test. That is an important matter because in this country we still have the spectre of as many as 1,000 drivers a year being involved in fatal accidents while in excess of the legal alcohol limit. The document refers also to the problem of water pollution that is caused by nitrates and to the difficulty of harmonising tyre depth treads, on which we were unique in opposing the European Commission's proposals. There is also the matter of the lorry weight derogations.

When one reads these documents, it is important to do so carefully to find out what the Government are saying about what is happening. A classic example is the position regarding heavy lorries. Paragraph 1.16 on page 6 points out:

"the United Kingdom's existing derogation from the Community weights and dimensions for 5 and 6 axled vehicles should continue until 31 December 1998."

Paragraph 7.13 on page 20 states:

"derogations . . . should end on 31 December 1998."

Those two paragraphs say exactly the same thing. The second paragraph clearly points to the fact that by the end of December 1998 there will be 44-tonne lorries on British roads and, by then, the weight maximum will probably be 50 tonnes. Without careful reading, it is difficult to deduce what the Government are allowed to derogate and what they are not. One must read such documents closely.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the derogation won by my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Transport was substantially better than that originally proposed by the European Commission and that he should be talking about 40-tonne lorries, not 44-tonne lorries?

Mr. Wardell: Yes, I accept that the former Secretary of State for Transport won that derogation, but I should have preferred him to do better and to ensure that such lorries will not be allowed on Britain's roads until the

bridges in this country can accommodate the loads that those lorries will impose on them. I am extremely concerned that we ensure that when that derogation becomes invalid or is completed at the end of 1998, resources should be made available to ensure that that will not pose a major threat to our existing infrastructure.

I listened carefully to the Minister and to what he said about how well we are performing relative to other European Community countries in our compliance with various directives and regulations. In the intervention that he kindly allowed me to make, I referred to environmental pollution and pointed out that the way in which the Department of the Environment deliberately avoided implementing the bathing water directive of 1976 was something of which the Government should be ashamed.

The Government defined a "bathing beach" by the numbers of people using the beaches, in such a way that not one single beach in Wales could be classified as a bathing beach. The Government then said that that directive therefore did not apply to any beach in the Principality. That has meant that raw sewage is still poured into the sea from about 120 short sea outfalls. We need to accept that such things are happening. It is a pity that the Department of the Environment was not big enough—I do not mean in size, but in its moral attitude and stance—to admit that that was a deliberate way to avoid and evade that important directive.

I am concerned about the way in which the House deals with European legislation. The Select Committee on European Legislation said in its report that an inquiry is taking place into the way that legislation arises. Paragraph 15.4 of the Select Committee report states:

"In two cases the Council adopted a common position on a proposal before the debate recommended by the Select Committee could be arranged."

A Minister may go to the Council of Ministers and make a decision, but there is not enough time for the House to debate the issue. I find it completely unacceptable that the House is denied the opportunity to debate matters of concern.

I hesitate to say this as I may be incorrect, but I imagine that very few right hon. and hon. Members know that every hon. Member is automatically a member of the Standing Committee on European Community Documents and has the right to attend its meetings. That ignorance is a great shame, because, although hon. Members cannot vote, it would be an interesting spectacle to see most of us turning up to one of the debates and to discover what contribution we could make.

It is a great disadvantage to the people of Wales that no Welsh Office Minister, including the Secretary of State, has ever been to a meeting of the Council of Ministers. I find it incredible that the way countries vote in the Council of Ministers is not recorded. It is high time that the way in which Ministers vote is made known, so that we understand the exact position of each country.

I can think of two examples which illustrate the inadequacy of current procedures, and both involve industries which are important to the United Kingdom —steel and aluminium. The beverage container directive of some years ago would have dealt a major blow to the only three plants in Britain that manufactured tin plate which were located in south Wales. Sadly, their number has now declined to two—in Trostre and in Ebbw Vale. They would have been decimated if the directive had been implemented in its original form. However, the director of British Steel's tin plate division telephoned me a few days before the Standing Committee met. He knew nothing about the directive that was being considered in the House, and he had no opportunity to discuss it with right hon. and hon. Members.

The second example is this year's hazardous waste directive, which proposes a bizarre definition of waste. For example, material which is a by-product from nickel or aluminium plants is regarded as waste, when it is a valuable commodity elsewhere in the industry. The Aluminium Federation did not know that that important draft directive was being considered in the House.

I hope that there will be major reforms in the way in which directives are dealt with following the Select Committee on European Legislation's report and recommendations. Some 410 documents have been deposited in the House. Few of them have seen the light of day for detailed consideration and that worries me greatly.

I find it infuriating to witness the Prime Minister remaining obdurate in her isolation against the proposed social charter for human rights. The Prime Minister said at the Madrid summit on 27 June this year:

"The Council's conclusions on this subject recognise that the highest priority is to create the conditions for more jobs. The Government do not believe that the Community's proposed social charter would help to achieve this aim. Indeed, we believe that imposing extra burdens on industry would make the Community less competitive."

That seems like a voice from the past—more in line with the Ottoman empire in decline. It is the voice of a state in disarray. That is an anachronistic and moribund view. It offers us the bizarre spectacle of Britain as the poor man of Europe, deeply worried that Greece, Portugal and Spain are keen to implement the social charter to ensure that the increased competition generated by the single market does not drag down wages and working conditions to the lowest common denominator.

I do not go along with the Prime Minister's philosophy. I would rather take a different view—that of the report drawn up on behalf of the EC Committee on Social Affairs and Employment on the social dimension of the internal market, on 23 February this year, which shows why we need the social charter. It says:

"The completion of the internal market should not be used, therefore, to undermine established social standards in the Member States by reference to job losses as a result of excessive wage levels by comparison with those in Member States. The social framework of the internal market should not be left to market decisions, but must be regulated at Community level. In the field of the health and safety of workers in particular it is essential that national provisions should be harmonized. Product-related provisions must therefore be harmonized at the highest possible level to ensure that a worker is not at greater risk merely because he is operating a machine for which the safety standard differs from that operated by his colleague. Within workplaces, non-product-related labour protection can be regulated on the basis of the highest possible minimum standards. Countries with higher levels of labour protection should not be allowed to reduce them."

I apologise for the length of that quotation, but it makes my point.

The social charter offers the citizens of post-1992 Europe the prospect of social improvements, especially in living and working conditions, social protection, education and training.

When the summit meeting of the European Council takes place on 8 and 9 December, Opposition Members will hope that there is a unanimous decision to adopt the

[Mr. Wardell]

charter. There is no longer any merit in striving for political machismo by flexing one's muscles in a minority of one.

7.38 pm

Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East): The hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Wardell) referred to the Select Committee on Procedure and to an examination of the scrutiny procedures of the House. I agreed with many of the points he made, but as a member of the Select Committee on European Legislation, I should emphasise that paragraph 15(2) on page 33 of the White Paper states:

"the Lord President said that the European Legislation Committee did a very good job and he did not see any need to make many changes to the basic system, but thought that the way European legislation was handled in the House could be improved".

Recently there have been a couple of press leaks which suggest that, in about three weeks, the Select Committee on Procedure will produce what appear to be extremely interesting and admirable suggestions. As a member of the EC Scrutiny Committee—perhaps I can engage the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow)—I hope that those suggestions will not fundamentally change the way in which that Committee functions.

Mr. William Powell (Corby): Will my hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Dykes: I shall give way in a moment, but I am rather worried about the time available for remaining speeches.

The European Legislation Committee acts as a sifting mechanism. I do not say that to defend, in any way, a vested interest—far from it. The sifting and advisory directional functions of that Committee—it could suggest to other Select Committees that they might consider investigating a particular area—represents a welcome matrix. I shall give way to my hon. Friend without, I hope, incurring your displeasure, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. William Powell: As a member of the Select Committee on Procedure I can tell my hon. Friend that he is not likely to be disappointed.

Mr. Dykes: I am grateful. That is a vindication of the thing of which all hon. Members should be proud—the fact that we have the strongest scrutiny procedures of the member states. The Minister said that earlier. That scrutiny is a good and a bad thing. It is good because it shows, once again, that the House is addicted to careful and meticulous scrutiny of national governmental and Community decisions. We notice, however, that an enormous quantity of national public spending goes through here late at night and is voted upon without many people paying much attention. We cannot, however, do everything perfectly.

The bad effect of such scrutiny is that it engenders over-preoccupation and anxiety. The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) was right when he said there was an anxiety about leaping into the dark. Although we joined the Community in 1973, it is still seen by some as a perilous and dangerous institution. The reaction provoked by such scrutiny may be, "You be careful what those foreigners are up to, George, or we will really be in trouble." I use the name George in the symbolic sense and I am not referring to any particular Minister or Opposition spokesman. We should get away from such an attitude.

Without sounding oppressive to my colleagues, I must say that we have had a series of fantasy speeches today about the realities of the Community. It is rather disturbing that many of those speeches were made by my hon. Friends rather than Opposition Members. A fantasy feeling abounded about the attitude of the Germans. The German dream of reunification is perhaps the most powerful cement that binds those two nations. It is absurd to believe that we or any other European country could say, "We know that, after the war, we said that you should be united and that it was terrible to have a divided Germany, but we were, in fact, only pretending." Imagine suggesting to the Germans that we have our old ideal blueprint for them and then accusing them of being aggressive and militaristic should they refuse to accept it. That is totally absurd.

The Germans also suffered enormously during the second world war—6·5 million of its people were killed. The nation suffered at the hands of the Nazi terror gang that seized power without any parliamentary majority in 1933. Unlike after the end of the first world war, however, the Germans, especially in the western part, were treated well in 1945. The story of the eastern part was a sad one, but the treatment meted out to those Germans by the Soviets later improved somewhat. After the second world war, however, the West Germans were brought into the comity of nations and they were not excluded as in 1918. No revanchism has arisen and we all view with admiration the firmly anchored tradition of moderate politics and moderate economics in the Federal Republic.

The process of reunification is a complicated matter. I believe that whatever form it may take, however, it will happen faster rather than slower than expected. The East Germans are motivated by two principal aspirations. One is reunification, but, at the moment, the main one is the search for freedom, participation in Government and exercising their choice. Unlike some of my hon. Friends, I do not believe that East Germans are on the verge of embracing Horatio Alger-type capitalism. I would be delighted if that were so, because, as a Conservative, I believe that free enterprise is the best means of economic organisation.

I believe that the East Germans are still addicted to their Socialist form of society, but that they want social democracy and freedom of choice within that framework. Perhaps a small minority will become addicted to the capitalist system later on. If the vast proportion of the new, greater united Germany remains relatively heavily collectivistic but socially democratic, and West Germany remains a much more mixed capitalist system—we are told that that system operates a high degree of regulation and is inefficient in some respects, but for all that it is an amazing economic miracle—those differences will gradually fade away. The similarities between the systems will then begin to emerge.

Why cannot such changes take place within the context of the European Community? It is manifestly ridiculous for people now to suggest that because of the interesting, fascinating and heart-warming upsurges in eastern European countries and in East Germany with the breaching of the wall, that means that there should be an end to any programme of integration and European

union. It would be absurd to suggest that the Community should pause for several decades to wait for the complicated east European geo-political processes to be worked out into a final result. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The 11 member states—perhaps I should say 10, as Greece remains an awkward member of the Community—are committed, enthusiastic perpetrators and exponents of increasing and developing European integration and union, including monetary union. Once again the danger is that the United Kingdom remains on the sidelines of that process looking unenthusiastic, curmudgeonly and churlish. That does not serve the interests of our people. The Government show enormous enthusiasm, however, for particular areas of Community policy—the internal market is one good example. On 4 May I asked the then Paymaster General, now Secretary of State for Northern Ireland:

"Will my right hon. Friend respond positively to the idea of contracts being gradually and increasingly in ecus as well as in national currencies?"

My right hon. Friend replied:

"The British Government in their separate actions have shown an enthusiasm for such ecu transactions and have regarded them as a much more sensible and practical way forward."—[*Official Report*, 4 May 1989; Vol. 152, c. 440.]

That is a good example of our enthusiasm for developing European instruments of one kind or another. We make the mistake, once again, however, of not approaching all developments with common enthusiasm. I do not suggest that the Government should agree every jot and tittle and every proposal in a rigid framework. We should try, however, to emulate the enthusiasm of the newest member state, Spain. That country is obviously enthusiastic because of the benefits that will come to Spain as a result of its membership, but its enthusiasm for the Community is genuine. We should share the interests and enthusiasms of the other member states for developing all the aspects of integration mentioned in the Single European Act. My right hon. Friend the Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell)—he is not present at the moment—persists in arguing that other proposals for European union, apart from the internal market, are not mentioned in the Act, but that is not so.

We have nothing to lose from our enthusiasm and everything to gain. The fantasy that we should hold on to our national sovereignty, like some old-fashioned concept which overrides all other considerations, is manifestly absurd. Why are we not worried about the seeming loss of sovereignty in NATO? In NATO it is almost possible—I say "almost" to exaggerate the point—for an American Commander-in-Chief to order this country to war. Our sovereignty is subsumed in NATO in terms of voting and collective decisions. We should consider the European Community in the same light as NATO.

In the process of obfuscation and myopia, which continues to represent our rather silly, old-fashioned attitude towards the European Community, we misrepresent—sometimes, unfortunately, in a rather offensive manner—the proposals of Mr. Delors. We misrepresent the remit given to him by the Council of Ministers in respect of European monetary union and regarding the other proposals he makes as a senior member of the European Commission. The Delors blueprint was a blueprint only because the Council of Ministers and the central bankers committee specifically requested that blueprint. That does not mean that it is rigidly couched and cannot be negotiated on in terms of the stages not yet agreed.

The Madrid meeting agreed to stage 1 only. I believe that there is plenty of room for compromise, flexibility, agreement and give and take in the later stages. Notwithstanding the polite response of the Bundesbank president—his response may have been dictated by devious reasons as he is a devious as well as an extremely witty gentleman—we are making a mistake by, once again, being the odd man out. We have said that we have our own rather special esoteric "free-market forces in competing currencies" document and that is what should be accepted. We are continually selective, to the irritation of our European partners, and that is a grave mistake.

There is misunderstanding not only of Delors's aspirations as president of the Commission, but about the form that the Community will probably take in future. It will not be some rigid, bureaucratic, centralised body directed by a Brussels bureaucracy which is a single governmental entity. The accidental modern American definition of federal government as a single government entity is a historic aberration. Federalism did not originally mean that. It meant what nationalists in Britain presumably aspire to—a federation of powerful component elements with a weak central authority embracing the whole federation which carries out only the functions common to all the components, as agreed by the components.

Perhaps that is not possible now because of centrifugal forces within a country and between member states in a cohesive grouping, such as the European Community. No one in the Community has suggested that Europe should have one Government. A federal system would be a co-operative structure based on majority voting and the Single European Act with each sovereign Government willingly pooling its sovereignty and agreeing to the necessary treaty changes arising therefrom.

Mr. Janman: I am interested in my hon. Friend's definition of federalism and his reference to the United States. Does he agree that the Delors report in its present form, which proposes a single currency in Europe and a central bank, would make national decisions on monetary, budgetary and fiscal policy meaningless? That is centralisation, as opposed to the federalism of the United States where individual states have federal power over their budgets.

Mr. Dykes: My hon. Friend will forgive me if I do not go into detail. Delors and his colleagues were asked to produce a tightly drawn-up blueprint and that has been done. It does not mean that matters will not be negotiated and then changed. I do not want us to reject those proposals.

Sir Russell Johnston: Does the hon. Gentleman also reject the idea that there will be some sort of European Government one day? I trust not.

Mr. Dykes: I would not necessarily reject that. Although I am regarded as a Eurofanatic—whatever that may be—I do not see a federal Europe as a single governmental entity. We are developing a unique new mechanism which will be the pattern for the future. That is historically exciting. The future is unascertainable even

[Mr. Dykes]

to the sage Members of the Social and Liberal Democrats. None of us can tell the future. There will not be a menace to this country.

If we had the economic authority and success of some other member nations, people in Brussels would not laugh when we said, "We have lessons, strictures and advice on economics and politics to hand out to you. Please listen to us because we know better." It is absurd for us to do that until we have a more successful economy. Sadly, despite well-meaning propaganda, which I use in my speeches outside the House, we have not had a supply-side miracle yet, although I hope that we shall have one soon.

I hope that we shall not be too selective and say, "the internal market is wonderful. With free enterprise, it is easy to achieve. How dare other member states be so slow?", but in other areas say, "No that is dangerous, we must not do that. We must go slowly and not make haste."

On 12 July I asked my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office:

"There is a certain amount of puzzlement in Athens because, when it comes to social charter provisions, the differences between countries and traditions are too great to make any similarity possible whereas in respect of the internal market, for ecomomic and financial reasons, it is possible for us to achieve total harmony within a few years. Why is there a difference in the British Government's attitude to those two aspects?"

She answered:

"As my right hon. and learned Friend said earlier, the difference is that we believe that the social dimension should help to improve economic performance across Europe. It is clear that the Council of Europe social charter, which provided a framework, was a very good text, but it did not extend to deciding at European level those matters that we properly believe should be decided by each nation state. We know that liberalisation and deregulation are the only way to achieve economic growth and a reduction in unemployment. We believe that we should be entitled, in accordance with the Commission's principle of subsidiarity to decide which way the country goes."—[*Official Report*, 12 July 1989; Vol. 156, c. 966.]

In Brussels that is seen as a glaring contradiction of our attitude to the internal market. It is a pity that such glaring contradictions persist in our attitude to Europe.

7.54 pm

Mr. Jim Sillars (Glasgow, Govan): The hon. Member for Suffolk, Central (Mr. Lord), speaking as a representative of the Western European Union, asked about the motivation behind changes in the Soviet Union and other parts of eastern Europe. It may be instructive to ponder the words of the Italian leader of the Communist party, Antonio Gramsci, who accurately defined a crisis as something that happens when the old order is dying but the new order has not yet been born.

When we witness, particularly in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, the collapse of an ideology, we should bear in mind that the Marxist ideology is a secular religion, if that is not a contradiction. Marxists believed that Marxism and Leninism provided a scientific methodology according to which they could understand the history of the world and, more importantly, its future. They carried that certainty with them from the October revolution of 1917 until the times of Leonid Brezhnev. Since then, we have witnessed in the Communist parties of the Soviet Union and its satellites the collapse of that so-called scientific certainty. We have seen ideological collapse and intellectual bankruptcy. Once Communist parties reached the stage of ceasing to believe in the inner core of what motivated them, change was bound to arise.

What changes are we likely to see in east and west Europe as a result of recent events? I do not speak simply as a partisan who dislikes the Prime Minister's ideology when I say that I was disappointed by her speech at the Mansion house. However, she was right when she said that recent changes in eastern Europe represent danger. Everyone accepts that at times one has to be cautious. The one concept that did not come through in her speech was an understanding of the opportunities now opening up in both east and west Europe for a permanent settlement of the post-1945 situation, which many people thought was permanent, but proved to be impermanent. I was struck by the Prime Minister's attitude. She seemed to regard events, particularly in East Germany, as a chance to launch a tactical attack against those arguing for greater integration and unity. She seemed to present the usual Downing street tunnel vision precisely when a wider understanding was needed from the head of the British Government.

As someone who wishes Scotland to be separate from the British state and separately represented in the European Community, I am frustrated that folk like me will be represented at the Paris summit by the lady in Downing street who does not reflect majority Scottish opinion about developments in eastern Europe.

Recent events in eastern Europe were a shock to the regimes in power there. It seems to have been quite a shock to folk in the west, too. I was entertained on Sunday by an article by Bruce Anderson in *The Sunday Telegraph* in which he said that some people may be nostalgic for the stability of the cold war. Such nostalgia has been displayed in the debate tonight and in several public statements by individuals from various interest groups. I was surprised that people were taken aback when German reunification came back on to the agenda. From the moment when change began in the Soviet Union, I thought that the reunification of Germany was bound to re-emerge as the cardinal political dispute in Europe.

I welcome the reunification of Germany. There can be no permanent settlement of post-war Europe or any serious development of unity within the European Community without that reunification. It is central and it must be dealt with. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston)—I hope that he does not mind me calling him that—I was disturbed by the note of apprehension in a number of speeches today about a reunified Germany. It is not justified.

The people of West Germany have a history which everyone knows, but they have had decades of democratic development; their democratic roots have grown deep in their political culture. They have prosecuted their Nazi war criminals and made atonement for what was done between 1939 and 1945. There must come a time when we stop telling 19 and 20-year-old West and East Germans that they are guilty of what their grandfathers did. They have a good record of the development of democracy.

The green movement is a good example of this. It originated in Germany and it could have sprung only from a society that is concerned about the whole of humanity —the global village.

Since 1945, the people of East Germany have been subjected to Stalinist propaganda—a superior type of malign propaganda—yet at the end of it they are as thirled

to the idea of freedom and democracy as anyone else. They managed to withstand that sort of assault on their intellects, which says a great deal for their quality and worth.

We should approach German people as we would any others. We all have things in the history of our countries of which to be ashamed, and people should be examined in terms of what they have done recently and of their potential for a constructive contribution in the years that lie ahead.

We must accommodate the reunification of Germany. I do not suggest that that will be easy or that other states will have no opinions about it. We are involved in the geopolitics of western Europe and of the Soviet Union and the United States. We all recognise—some of us emphasise it more than others—that the Soviet Union is paranoid about the necessity of some buffer between it and what it reckons to be a potential Western enemy. We may deplore that historical fact and say that it is unjustified, but it is a geopolitical fact of life, and the Soviet Union's point of view will be important.

However, the fundamental right of the people of Germany to be reunified must be recognised, and all the pieces on the political chessboard must be moved to accommodate it.

Mr. Lord: The hon. Gentleman mentioned regimes disintegrating. My point was that, if that is happening, it is within the power of some of those regimes to make sure that they do not disintegrate. They have done so in the past; this time for some reason, they are choosing not to.

My other point was about the great dangers in the changeover period. I am as keen to welcome it as anyone, but does the hon. Gentleman accept that now that people are talking about the reunification of Germany, the implications of that for the Warsaw pact and NATO and defence generally—I am not talking about the Common Market—are enormous? I am worried about the instability and the problems that we face in getting it right.

Mr. Sillars: The hon. Gentleman sounds as though he ghosted the article in the *Yorkshire Post* which was written by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), who managed to get through the entire article about problems in the East without ever mentioning the European Community.

I can understand people's anxiety about NATO and the Warsaw pact, and I do not suggest for a moment that they should voluntarily dissolve themselves tomorrow morning. They are part of the geopolitical chessboard about which I was talking earlier. Of course the interests of the core group in each of these alliances must be taken into account, but I am coming to some practical suggestions on how we can constructively seize the opportunity to tackle the problem.

One of the biggest factors in the continuing instability is the economic crisis in the eastern zone; another is the political problem that Mr. Gorbachev faces. It is strangely paradoxical that Gorbachev is much more popular outside the Soviet Union than inside it. Cries of "Gorby, Gorby" are heard on the streets of West Germany, but not in Moscow or Kiev and certainly not in the Baltic states. Unless we assist the Gorbachev faction—he represents an important school of thought inside the Soviet Communist party—to remain in the ascendancy, problems in the Soviet Union can spill over and create further instability. We should be concerned about underpinning the Gorbachev faction and about how to remove some of the instability. My party has written to the Foreign Secretary about this.

We do not suggest starting at the highest political point of discussion. There are three major trading groups in Europe—the COMECON countries, the European Community and the EFTA countries. The European Community is the most cohesive group—a voluntary political and economic partnership which has existed for some time and shown the capacity to expand and absorb new members. It has an agreement about the co-ordination of foreign policy and we are approaching the single European market. It also has a monetary system from which but a few recalcitrant people dissent. The EC is the biggest, most powerful group in terms of economic power. We suggest that it takes the initiative and calls a major conference of these three trading groups so that the whole of Europe can sit down together, analyse and agree on the problems and then begin to solve them, to create better trade between West and East by studying and understanding each other's systems.

There will need to be more investment in the East by the West. Because of the system on the other side of the former iron curtain, that will have to be done through institutional methods, not the methods of the Western liberal democracies. We shall need to consider how we can transfer technology from the West to the East to raise the competence of its economies, and to consider how we can help train the East's manpower—senior and middle management—to cope with the trading opportunities that should flow from better relations between West and East. This conference and decisions on trading would be a mechanism of practical co-operation with beneficial results for the economies of eastern Europe. If we can start to raise the standard of living of these folk, we shall remove a great deal of the tension and instability.

The Scottish National party's final point concerns what will happen at the summit between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, which has been described by Gennady Gerasimov as "from Yalta to Malta". There is a big difference between Yalta and Malta: there were more than two people at Yalta, but there will be only two at Malta. As a European, I object to this sort of summit taking place with us excluded from it. I read that President Mitterrand was hoping that this week's Paris summit would make representations to President Bush to the effect that he would talk on our behalf when he met Gorbachev, but that is unacceptable in principle and in practice and it is not sensible from the point of view of the development of Europe.

The Soviet Union and the United States of America remain nuclear super-powers, but their recent history shows that they are no longer political super-powers. The European Community, along with other peoples in Europe, should be saying to those at that summit, "You may meet on this occasion on your own, but on future occasions, particularly if there are substantive matters concerning the development of unity within Europe, we shall invite you to our summit." That rather alters the basis on which the power equation is established.

We have been disturbed by the negative tone and approach from the British Government. It looks as though history is about to repeat itself. The Government have missed nearly every European bus, and it looks as if they are going to miss this one.

8.10 pm

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): We welcome and note the commitment of the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) to Europe, but he said that this is a Government without a vision on Europe. It is pretty rum for any speaker from the Labour party to complain about the Government's vision on Europe. During the six months covered by the report, the British Labour group in the European Parliament was led by a committed opponent of the European Community and British membership of it. During the past five years, two former leaders of the British Labour group in the European Parliament were thrown out because they dared to support the principle of British membership. The British Labour party in Strasbourg did not show much European vision.

As to the British Labour party in the House of Commons and Britain, its policy veers from bitter opposition to the Community to lukewarm support for it. It has more often shown downright hostility, and when it has not shown that, it has indulged in niggling criticism. The Labour party has no grounds for boasting of its vision on Europe. On the other hand, all the major developments in the European Community over the past 10 years have been the result of actions taken by the Government. The campaign for fairness in the European budget was essentially a British campaign, as was the pressure to secure changes in the common agricultural policy. The whole 1992 programme, which will bring so many benefits to everyone, was essentially a British campaign.

While others have been willing to make fiery speeches and indulge in European rhetoric about the ideals of the internal market, they have at the same time been willing to impose restrictions and to indulge in chauvinism. We do not need to be lectured on our commitment to Europe or our commitment to freedom by the French and Italians, who still impose exchange controls, or by the Germans, who are quite happy to indulge in a less than free market in financial services. No one can criticise the Conservative party for a lack of vision on Europe, because the British Government have been both practical and visionary in their approach to this issue.

Sometimes, our debates about Europe are dominated by whether Britain should remain in the Community. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman), if he catches your eye, Madam Deputy Speaker, will yet again raise that issue. However, we should recognise where the tide of history is. It is clear that the destiny of the United Kingdom is increasingly involved with that of our European partners. We have to recognise that Europe takes 50 per cent. of our exports and provides the basis of our defence. Those who seek to deny that our future is in the European Community are seeking, Canute-like, to stop the tide of history.

During the six months covered by this report, the chief issues were the future of the European monetary system, 1992 and the social charter. A number of outside commentators speak as if entry into the exchange rate mechanism would act as a panacea for the British economy, remove uncertainty over currency movements and, somehow or other, lead to faster growth and lower inflation. However, if we look at the way that the British economy compares with those of other countries in the ERM, we see that our inflation rate has been lower than some and that our growth rate is higher than that of West Germany and other members. Those who argue that there should be early British membership of the exchange rate mechanism may be guilty of committing the same mistake that we committed in 1925, when we joined the gold standard at the wrong rate of exchange. If we were to join the ERM at current deutschmark-sterling parity, we would be doing a gross disservice to British exporters and those who are competing with continental manufacturers in the British market.

Those who argue that we should join the ERM now ignore the fact that when the French and the Italians remove their exchange control restrictions, the ERM will be a highly volatile organisation. It is surely better for us to join after all that volatility and change have taken place rather than get on, helter-skelter, just before it may, if not get out of control, have a rocky ride. Some say that we should join the ERM not for economic but for political reasons, but we do not need to join the ERM to prove ourselves to be a good European power. We have shown over the past 10 years that we have a strong commitment to the European Community and it is not necessary to join that talisman to demonstrate that commitment yet again.

The social charter poses a great threat not only to the United Kingdom but to other countries in the European Community. We have to recognise that within Europe there are wide variations in living standards, productivity and efficiency in industry. If we seek, through the social charter, to impose standardised obligations throughout the Community, the chief victims of those standardised obligations will be those who live in the poorest parts of the Community.

It is wonderful to stand up and say that we are all for the social charter, but we should ask ourselves what it will do to employment in the Community. Will it encourage the creation of more jobs? I doubt it. What will it do to internationally mobile investment? We in the United Kingdom are pleased by the large number of American and Japanese companies that come to invest here. Will the social charter encourage one internationally mobile company to come to the European Community? Of course it will not. It will act as a deterrent to future investment, restrict economic growth and therefore reduce job opportunities.

The policies of Jacques Delors—remembering what happened in Northern Ireland we might almost call them de Lorean dreams as they would be even more expensive than that venture—must be put on hold because of what is happening in the East. It is not sufficient to say to the people of Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany that we are willing to consider their countries joining the Community in association. After all, when Spain, Portugal and Greece threw off the yoke of dictatorship in the 1970s, we welcomed their applications to join. We must look forward to a Community that includes Eastern European countries now within the Warsaw pact. Were we to do that, we would do a major deal for peace in the whole of Europe and for future prosperity. If we proceed quickly with the Delors proposals it would do nothing to encourage those countries to join the Community and it may discourage them. If we look to the future, there is great merit in saying that we should put all these proposals on hold for at least 12 months to see what is going to happen elsewhere in the world.

I will now turn to the attitude of Europe to the rest of the world post-1992. It is fashionable to make wonderful, visionary speeches—that is what the Opposition would call them—about the attitude of Europe to the Third world and other countries and to say that the European Community will not indulge in the fortress-Europe policies that we all condemn. However, so far fortress-Europe is winning. The common agricultural policy is based upon the concept of Community preference, which says that if we can grow it in Europe, we should buy it from the European grower and not import it unless it is unavoidable. The EEC sugar regime is based upon the concept of dumping sugar on the Third-world market, pauperising the Third-world growers and then taking a little sugar back and saying that we are being good. That policy has pauperised many Third world economies.

The essence of the broadcasting directive, which is referred to in the document we are debating, is to restrict the amount of television that is produced by non-Community producers. Surely that should be left to the viewer to decide. Some time ago, when there was a difficulty in the Community's photocopier industry, it was solved by putting tariffs on Japanese imports. Again, the Community was saying that it would restrict competition in the Community market in order to restrict one Community producer and make it more difficult for people to import into the Community. The Community does not have a good record in respect of fortress Europe.

When the Minister replies to the debate, I hope that he will emphasise the British Government's commitment to that philosophy. Unfortunately, it is not a philosophy that is always shared by the Commission in Brussels, nor by the President of the Commission, who, as a good Socialist does not think too much of the consumer but is more concerned with the producer.

8.21 pm

Mr. William Powell (Corby): The hon. Member for Gower (Mr. Wardell) and my hon. Friend the Minister reminded us that the subject for debate is developments in the European Community until 30 June this year. However, since then we have been overwhelmed by events that have made the real topic of discussion almost irrelevant to our proceedings.

Whatever the reason in the past for having twice-yearly debates reflecting upon developments that had finished, some time ago, I hope that this will be the last such debate that occurs in the House. I hope that in future we shall move to a system—the Select Committee on Procedure may have something to say on this in its soon-to-be-published report—of twice-yearly debates taking place just before the European summit meetings so that hon. Members have an opportunity of looking forward to what those summit meetings might achieve rather than looking back upon events which may be in the dim and distant past.

The Select Committee on Procedure—of which I am a member—will shortly publish a major report which I commend to all hon. Members. It will produce at least some ways in which we can considerably improve the handling of European debates and legislation in the House. Those hon. Members who have referred to the inadequacies of the present proceedures are absolutely right. The report will be a solid document and I hope that hon. Members will look at the evidence as well as the conclusions.

During his speech so many hours ago, my hon. Friend the Minister referred to the French presidency. I do not wish to be critical of France; far from it. Many of my hon. Friends know that I am an enthusiastic Francophile. I am used to negotiating with the French as my wife is French and it is something that I have to do every day. It is much easier than many hon. Members realise.

However, it has to be said that so far the French presidency has been disappointing. My hon. Friend the Minister referred to the success of the Spanish presidency in advancing the single market. That same praise could have been extended to the German presidency just over a year ago. However, the current presidency is not making a great deal of progress. The French still have time to redeem the position and I hope that they will. However, I fear that their single-minded determination to advance the Delors proposals has blinded them to the necessity of proceeding with the 1992 programme as quickly as possible.

I speak as one who has taken an interest in the reform of copyright law in the House. I regret the fact that progress is not being made in establishing the common copyright law for which we had hoped under the French presidency as fast as looked to be possible when the Spanish handed over the chairmanship of the Council of Ministers.

The French appear to want us to join the exchange rate mechanism and appear to be surprised that we are not keen to be involved in that evolving new Community institution. When they express those thoughts, they do so in a rather resentful and critical way rather than in a way that woos us and tries to spell out how advantageous it would be to us if we were in the exchange rate mechanism. It has to be said that that is different from the traditional analysis of the way in which the French character operates when it is trying to get people onto its side. I hope that my remarks about the French presidency will be picked up by them and that they will try to redeem what is proving to be —this is not just my view—a rather disappointing presidency.

I want now to deal with checkpoint Charlie in the American sector of Berlin. Many hon. Members have visited checkpoint Charlie, some on a number of occasions. One of the places most worth visiting there is the museum standing close by. Some museums may be magnificent but essentially dead places recalling the past. There is nothing rich and magnificent about the museum at checkpoint Charlie. However, although it commemorates the dead, it lives; it lives with fire—for freedom. At that museum is celebrated—I use that word deliberately—the 175 people murdered so that they could be free. They were murdered at the Berlin wall. I am amazed that so far during the discussion and with so much public comment made because of the exhilarating events in the past week, we have not taken the time to recall those who gave their lives, not only that they should be free but that others should be free as well. In the past week we have seen the realisation of a dream for which people gave their lives, not just in Berlin but along the length and breadth of the iron curtain from Stettin to Trieste.

The other matter which is not commemorated but appears in the museum is the graphic map of the environs of the city of Berlin—east and west—and around it the

[Mr. William Powell]

disposition of Soviet armed forces. There are 380,000 men and many thousands of tanks and they are the best forces that the Soviet Union is able to deploy. The events of the past week have certainly made that level of deployment no longer necessary. One message which we should send from the House tonight to the President of the United States and the President of the Soviet Union when they meet in a week or two in Malta, is that all Europe will be expecting an agreement from them to lower the threshold of conventional weapons in both the East and the West.

President Bush has already made some notable proposals. Negotiations about them are taking place in Vienna. The very least that should come out of that meeting of the two presidents in the Mediterranean is a reduction in the enormous level of conventional armed forces in both East Germany and West Germany. As Mr. Gorbachev has always been prepared to accept what are called asymmetrical reductions, the size of the Soviet conventional forces is no longer appropriate to the political circumstances in East Germany, the Soviet sector of Germany.

A number of hon. Members have referred to what may or may not happen in eastern Europe in the coming weeks, months and years. The assumption is that these countries are moving towards democracy. May I stress with every sinew in my body that I hope that they are moving towards democracy. At this stage, however, we should make no assumptions. Eastern Europe is an economic disaster area. The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) referred to the state of the East German economy, with subsidies holding food and house prices down to 1949 levels and further subsidies holding transport prices down to pre-war levels. The right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) referred to the fact that the ostmark would be no longer a sustainable currency. However, what has happened in eastern Europe for a whole generation amounts to no more than a suspension of the laws of arithmetic. Prices have been held down to levels that no longer reflect economic reality.

The changes that are most likely to come about in eastern Europe are surely these: prices will rise, and they are likely to rise faster than wages and salaries. If they do not, it is extremely likely that the countries of eastern Europe will make no economic progress. If prices rise sharply but wages and salaries do not rise so fast, that will be a recipe for considerable social conflict.

Inflation and social conflict are the most likely outcome of economic developments in eastern Europe during the next few years. Democracy may emerge out of that. Let us all hope so. However, dictatorship of one sort or another is another possible outcome. It would be a very bleak outcome indeed for eastern Europe. We in the West must do all that we can to ensure that that is not the final outcome. It cannot all be done within the space of a week, by means of an instant reaction to these exhilarating events. The West will have to provide capital, education, accountants, managers—just about everything. I have had the opportunity to visit three of those countries during the last few months. Anyone else who has been there, too, will know just how deficient they are in all the elementary things that are needed to sustain economic life. We must all hope that the most optimistic scenario is the one that eventually emerges, but there is a real danger that that may not happen.

The events of the last week cannot now be reversed without shattering consequences for the whole of the continent of Europe. It is still possible that the Red Army could seek to impose law and order in eastern Europe, but if it did it would shatter everything. Eastern Europe would be unable to make the economic advances that it seeks to make. The West has a most profound interest in ensuring that that is not the outcome of future Soviet policy. If, however, the East German regime were to bring down the iron curtain again, the pressure to leave East Germany would be even greater and a gasket would blow. Without question, there would be fighting in the streets in East Germany.

We face very difficult, very testing times. We must hope for the best and most optimistic outcome, but we must be prepared to accept that that may not be the final outcome.

8.35 pm

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): My hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Powell) is right to be cautious, but he is probably even more right to be hopeful.

On 27 April I asked my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister the following question:

"If my right hon. Friend were the Chancellor of the West German Republic, would her main priority not be the unification of Germany and further traditional moves towards involvement with eastern Europe? What does this mean not only for NATO, but for the European Community?"—[*Official Report*, 27 April 1989; Vol. 151, c. 1088.]

My right hon. Friend, quite naturally in those circumstances, was unable to answer the question. I raise it now, six or seven months later, just to point out that there are some who are less fanatic and less myopic in our views about Europe and who have seen, early, the strategic direction in which European developments are likely to take place.

Since January to June this year, the political earth's crust of our continent has been convulsed. The future political geology of Europe is as yet unknown, but one thing is certain: that the landscape has changed out of all recognition. Like the rise and fall of the Roman empire, the EEC—from January to June of this year—is history and it is scarcely more relevant than the Roman empire as a means of seeking the future well-being of Europe. Obviously it would be rash to rule out a takeover by the marshals in Moscow. As my hon. Friend has just said, we must fully maintain our defence posture until we can safely negotiate lower levels of defence and new treaties. However, we must make plans for the development of what Mikhail Gorbachev rightly calls the European home under the more likely conditions of military detente.

During the last fortnight the people of East Germany have diverted the mainstream of the European river into a more exciting, a more positive and a very different course. If I may caution the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston), anyone who relies on the old maps and charts is inviting the political equivalent of a disaster of titanic proportions.

Much is unpredicatable, but there are some certainties and they should be defined. First, there will be a united Germany—whether a federal Germany or a confederation it is too early to say. The extent of that united Germany is unknown. It is too early to define. Its role is too early to

define. Its relationship with Austria and the other eastern European countries is also too early to define. One thing, however, is certain: that there will be a larger and more powerful German entity. The fourth Reich—if I can simmer down those who get excited by the words—means commonwealth. The fourth Reich of the tabloids is at hand.

Secondly, the defence structures of Europe are bound to change radically. We are not yet in a position to predict the German position in that defence structure, but what we can say now is that Germany herself will make that decision.

Thirdly, the nature of the European Community is about to change radically. It was conceived as an economic and political grouping within western Europe, with its own internal balance of power. Of the 12 nations, four are roughly of the same size, population and importance. However, the new Europe, covering the whole continent, will be a Europe in which one country is more equal and predominant than any of the others.

The old blueprints of the clerks of the European Commission are about as relevant to the future of Europe as bows and arrows are to the future of warfare. The countries of eastern Europe will develop their own democracies, and naturally, at the same time they will be concerned to redevelop and rediscover their own identities. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is quite right. After two generations of totalitarian submergence they will not substitute the central control of Moscow with that of Brussels. Having taken power from their gaolers it is hardly likely that the people of Dresden will hastily hand it back to the beampters of the Berlaymont.

The feeling persists among a shrinking minority of antediluvian federalist dinosaurs who pay court to the ideas of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) that nothing has happened and that the world is the same—still flat. Their champion is President Mitterrand of France who naïvely believes that locking the Federal Republic into an ever-tightening EEC will somehow prevent the unification of Germany, and if not, will ensure that what takes place is acceptable to Mr. Delors. They would have slightly less chance of success imprisoning a mature eagle in a soggy cardboard box.

Sir Russell Johnston: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Marlow: I am sorry but other hon. Members wish to speak.

Sir Russell Johnston: Palaeolithic poppycock.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman said, "Palaeolithic poppycock." I reject that totally.

Germany will unite and it will be unified in a manner which is suited and satisfactory to the Germans—not to France and still less to Brussels. As Germany unites, it will progressively develop its penumbra of political and economic power into eastern Europe. As the Gulliver of German manufacturing industry ruptures the Lilliputian constraints of French policy, France may discover—I hope not too late—the traditional attractions of the balance of power—the economic balance of power rather than the military balance of power. Perhaps when the French discover that, they will discover that the country they need most is not Germany but the United Kingdom. Hopefully, their short-term manic obsession with a federal Europe will not lead them to blow up too many bridges which should be maintained against future needs.

Germany, while pursuing the rhetoric of stability and status quo, will quite naturally seek to advance her own interests. She will talk of Delors, but does anyone really believe that she will put European unity ahead of Germany? Would we do that in those circumstances? Given the strategic strength of the German position and the German economy, the only way in which the cup of success can be dashed from her lips would be through the spread of alarm. So it is not surprising that every statement from the Federal Republic will be designed to lessen that alarm. Even so, the reality of German interests will be the driving force of German policy.

The Germans have a massive prize within their grasp —the economic domination of Europe, the rebuilding of German pride and prestige and the final absolution from the guilt of 1939-45. How will that be achieved? Massive aid will pour into Prussia, Saxony and the rest of central Europe, financing the purchase of West German capital goods, technology, equipment and investment. East European industries will develop rapidly further in the interests of the countries involved and increasing still further the dominance of German manufacturing and the German economy within Europe.

Naturally, the cornucopia of aid to the East will drain the reservoir of German financial generosity available to the Common Market and at the same time German interest in and commitment to the ever-burgeoning social pressures and financial extravagances of the EEC will decline.

Whatever Germany says, she will be slow on Delors and monetary union. Whatever Germany says, she will be resentful of the power-centralising ambition of Brussels bureaucracy. Whatever Germany says, she will be impatient with the unnecessary development of yesterday's European institutions.

The future is exciting but uncertain. At this stage, all we can do is seek objectives, not set out detailed policies. I am amazed and not a little disturbed to read that this weekend the Commission had a brainstorming session on how to bring the rest of Europe under its control. This is a matter for elected Governments not clerks, for democracy and not for bureaucracy. I understand that the Commission may feel that its vested interests are threatened and I rejoice in that. Never again should so much power—including the power to initiate policies—be passed to bureaucrats.

The new Europe will be a democratic Europe, not a bureaucratic Europe. There will be a new Europe without barriers to trade but a Europe of nations, each country with its own identity, its own democratic institutions and its own economic and social priorities. It will be a Europe to which all nations from the Atlantic to the Urals are welcome. Federal Europe is dead. Long live Europe.

8.45 pm

Mr. Christopher Gill (Ludlow): When my hon. Friend the Minister opened the debate he pointed out that such occasions were used to examine the possibilities and the prospects for the future in Europe, and many right hon. and hon. Members have used the debate to talk about the future—quite naturally, because of the exciting times in which we live.

[Mr. Christopher Gill]

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) expressed some concern that there had not been much excitement and enthusiasm in the House this evening. I am most enthusiastic about the events that are unfolding in Europe. We cannot fail to ignore the fact that so many people in eastern Europe are rejecting totalitarianism. We have to ensure that we make it easy for eastern Europe to form closer and firmer links with the European Community. As my hon. Friend the Minister pointed out, we must extend the hand of friendship. We must not in any way make it difficult for those people; we must make it easier for them. We have to remove the obstacles of centralism and interventionism, and just about every hon. Member knows what I mean, because as a nation we have foundered on those rocks in terms of our wholehearted commitment to Europe.

Hon. Members have referred to the obstacles presented by Delors stages 2 and 3, but there is a more urgent need than ever before to stake out the common ground, not as Socialists, Liberals, Democrats or Conservatives but as Britons, Poles, French or Germans working together in a united and peaceful Europe.

Surely we can agree on matters affecting our environment, because so many of those matters transcend frontiers and are pan-European. We can agree on removing barriers, the physical, technical and financial barriers which obstruct the free movement of goods and services in Europe. We can agree on standards—not on prescriptions or recipes but on parameters. We can agree on security. President Gorbachev said that Europe is at the crossroads, and I agree with that. We are faced with a series of choices between a wider or a deeper Europe. I should like to think that we shall choose the wider Europe, capable of accommodating not only the 12 nations of the European Community but the six nations of the European Free Trade Association and the nations of eastern Europe, where the ideologies of the past are being rejected in a dramatic and unprecedented way. We want to create a Europe that, in the words of my hon. Friend the Minister, is "founded on freedom and building on prosperity".

The United Kingdom must weigh up carefully whether it sees Europe as a threat or an opportunity. Do we see it as a threat to our livelihoods because we are reluctant to increase our productivity to the best levels of Europe? Do we fear that we cannot improve our competitiveness so that we are as competitive as any other nation in Europe? Do we fear a threat to our national identity? I suggest that that is doubtful. Paragraph 4.4 of the report shows that we have hung on to our national identity. The fact that we have hung on to the pint, the mile and the acre shows that we are not prepared to submerge our national identity and that we shall continue to fight for it.

Let us consider the opportunities not only of the bigger domestic market but those for London to become the banking and commercial centre of Europe and for the United Kingdom to influence the debate and decisions on the course of European unity and to establish the traditional values that are so readily accepted in Britain of liberty and individual freedom as the central ethos for the European Community.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) said, there are no panaceas for Britain. We must not think that the bigger market will solve problems. It will be of benefit to us only if we exploit it. Similarly, the exchange rate mechanism is not a passport to lower interest rates or a guarantee of sound money. None of those things will do for us what we are not prepared to do for ourselves. In that context, to establish sound money, stable exchange rates and lower interest rates, we might as a Government and as a nation look hard at what we could do for ourselves by restoring the independent status of the Bank of England and freeing it from its current political control. There are other and more varied ways in which we can take steps to do for ourselves—things which, I suspect, hon. Members and certain sections of the British public are looking for Europe to do for us, which is totally unrealistic.

In the final analysis, we have a further choice. We have a choice to do so many things sooner rather than later; sooner while the spirit moves throughout Europe; sooner while the portents are good and our neighbours are beckoning for British leadership; and sooner while the opportunity exists as it never existed before. The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) referred to the opportunity as "breathtaking". Does it not behove us to do those things sooner rather than later? Let it never be said that we did them later because we lacked the confidence, motivation or will to take the opportunity of this floodtide in European history.

8.53 pm

Mr. Michael Irvine (Ipswich): Paragraph 15.3 of the White Paper records that the Select Committee on European Legislation considered 468 European Community documents between January and June 1989. In the event, seven debates covering 12 of those documents took place in Standing Committee and 22 debates covering 40 documents took place on the Floor of the House.

What the White Paper does not say is that the majority of those debates on the Floor took place after 10 pm, that they were poorly attended and that, in many cases, the documents under discussion were made available only a short time before the debate. Furthermore, the House was invariably faced with a fait accompli. All too often we found ourselves doing no more than taking note of what had already been formulated by the European Commission and decided some time beforehand behind closed doors by the Council of Ministers. We were not even rubber-stamping the legislation because it did not need our rubber stamp. It did not matter whether we rubber-stamped it or not because it had already been decided. As a House, we were only taking note.

I would go so far as to say that the ineffective way in which we deal with European Community legislation should be a matter of shame for the House. When we allow European legislation that is of much importance to the citizens of this country to pass into law without proper scrutiny, we are not merely failing to do our job properly but being false to the traditions and obligations of the House.

How can we put this right? First, we can do so by allocating more time to the scrutiny of European Community legislation. Hon. Members should compare the time that we spend scrutinising Community legislation month by month with the time that we spend scrutinising domestic legislation. Earlier this year, I spent 160 hours on the Standing Committee of the Self-Governing Schools etc. (Scotland) Bill.

Mr. Sillars: Serves you right.

Mr. Irvine: I was glad to do so. The Bill was interesting and was of great importance. It deserved much scrutiny, and it got it.

Mr. Sillars: When we Scots depart from here and return north of the border to an independent Scotland within Europe, the hon. Gentleman will have bags of time to consider European legislation.

Mr. Irvine: Quite a few Scots, such as myself, have come south and are doing very well here, thank you.

Leaving aside that interruption of questionable merit, the point remains that, although domestic legislation is important, European Community legislation is just as important, and sometimes more so. Both kinds of legislation need proper scrutiny. At the moment, the balance is wrong. If we are to exert maximum influence over European legislation, we must correct the imbalance.

Mr. Janman: I am genuinely interested in why my hon. Friend thinks that it is worth while spending much more time scrutinising European legislation, given that, because of the Single European Act amendments to the treaty of Rome, if we do not do what we are told, we will be taken to the European Court anyway. Why will spending all this extra time be worth while?

Mr. Irvine: My hon. Friend brings me to the second point which I wish to make about our scrutiny of European legislation. The other great weakness is the point of time at which we consider European legislation. At present, time after time we consider it when everything has already been decided. I hope that we will reform our procedures so as to address European legislation after it has been formulated by the European Commission but before it reaches the Council of Ministers. As my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock (Mr. Janman) pointed out, that does not mean that we can determine which way the legislation will go, but it will enable us to exert maximum influence.

It is fair to say that we have some influence. I was interested in the point made by my hon. Friend the Minister of State about the effect of last week's debate on European monetary union and the exchange rate mechanism on our partners in the European Community. He said that the strong cross-party feeling expressed in the House against stages 2 and 3 of the Delors proposals had had an impact on our partners' thinking. That powerfully reinforces my point. It shows that, if the House bestirs itself and we make our views known clearly at the right point, we can hope to influence our partners in the European Community and also the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Lord: I am following my hon. Friend's comments carefully. I think that he is saying that it is necessary for the parliamentary cycle in Britain to be fitted in with the European parliamentary cycle on all these issues, so that these debates can take place at the proper time.

Mr. Irvine: Precisely. We must tailor our procedures and practices to give proper scrutiny to European legislation. The present structure of the European legislative process is highly convenient to bureaucrats and is not without its advantages to certain statesmen, but it is profoundly undemocratic. There are dangers here for the European Community. Unless the institutions of the Community and of individual member countries are adapted to provide proper scrutiny of Community legislation and proper accountability to Parliament, somewhere along the line there will be trouble for the Community. There will be a reaction by the peoples of member states against the Community's autocratic tendencies.

Parliaments are always inconvenient to bureaucrats, but they are essential to democracy. The House has a particular part to play in developing Community institutions and parliamentary scrutiny. After all, the House of Commons developed the traditions of parliamentary democracy that won control first over the monarch and then over the Executive. We must now bestir ourselves and do the same in a European context. If we do that effectively, we will do a signal service for not only the nation and the House but our partners in the Community.

9.3 pm

Mr. Tim Janman (Thurrock): Earlier in the debate my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) implied that I might seek to raise the issue of whether Britain should be in the European Community. Although I do not wish to raise that issue tonight, I thought that his speech gave a long catalogue of reasons that could put that thought in one's mind. He listed many of the major problems that Britain faces as a result of its being in the European Community and I believe that, unless there is a rather sudden and dramatic sea change in the politics of the Community, this Government—and I suspect any future Government of either political persuasion—will be continually tussling with the European Community over matters that should be purely for the consideration of the national Government, as opposed to being matters that can be interfered with by the European Community as a consequence of the passing of the Single European Act.

I want to mention briefly three major developments in the Community which were documented in the White Paper and to spend far more time on a fourth. The Madrid meeting of the European Council in June and the Delors report on economic and monetary union are important, and I shall come back to them in detail. I want to put on record the other three developments in the White Paper which are of significance.

First, there are the on-going general agreement on tariffs and trade negotiations between the European Community and the United States. I must say to my hon. Friend the Minister that it is important that we continue to exert the maximum pressure possible on the European Commission and the Community through the Council of Ministers not to pursue a protectionist philosophy vis-a-vis our relationship with our great ally the United States. If we pursue such a policy, they will retaliate and we shall strengthen the seeds of protectionism on the other side of the Atlantic as well. We must continue to pursue a free trade approach from the European Community.

Secondly, I note that progress has been made in eliminating trade barriers with the European Free Trade Association countries. In view of the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South, I cannot resist the temptation to observe that if we continue to be in conflict with the European Community over which issues are sovereign and which are pan-sovereign and if the EFTA nations continue to win an increasingly good relationship with the European Community, we could eventually

[Mr. Tim Janman]

receive most of the trade benefits by being outside the Community, without the constitutional and political hassles that come from being in it.

Thirdly, I agree with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister that the draft Community charter on fundamental social rights is essentially a Marxist document. It goes completely against the policies and philosophy of the past 10 years in this country, which have resulted in a most dramatic fall in unemployment. We have virtually the lowest unemployment rate in Europe. France, for example, has an unemployment rate twice as great and there is no real sign or hope of that rate coming down.

I want to concentrate on economic and monetary union, and the European exchange rate mechanism. There are two key aspects. The first is the economic aspect, and the second is the more insidious and subversive political aspect. Should we join the exchange rate mechanism now or at a future date? Joining the ERM now would be an unmitigated disaster. It would lock us into a corporatist system of stage managing currencies which would institutionalise our current large trade deficit for the foreseeable future, given the current exchange rates. Interest rates would go up and down like a yo-yo to keep our currency from being revalued and to maintain its staying in the right band. Membership of the ERM would not bring any stability, and if the Confederation of British Industry and other large business interests think that it would, they would receive a rather nasty shock. We would lose our right to deci ie our domestic monetary policy and inevitably we would effectively lose the right to decide our public spending policies, which are a ramification of the political policies that the Government of the day wish to pursue.

An exchange rate is a value put on a currency vis-a-vis that country's economic and social performance in relation to its peers. The European exchange rate mechanism is corporatist, if not Socialist, as it attempts to prevent the market mechanism from working. I thought that as Conservative Members we believed in markets and the price mechanism. Membership of the European exchange rate mechanism, followed by one currency—the second stage of the Delors report—followed by a central bank could lead to high inflation. The Delors report does not recommend separating the money supply from politicians and does not propose legal sanctions against the proposed central bank should it not maintain its objective of price stability, which the Delors report lays down.

The hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) and the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) mentioned Germany. The reason why Germany has been so successful is that in 1949 it separated monetary policy from the politicians. That has enabled Germany to enjoy 20 years with inflation never going above 5 per cent. The result has been much better labour relations and much reduced strike activity because there have been stable prices and no political meddling or pressure on the money supply. The Delors report failed to propose that we go in that direction. The exchange rate mechanism and stages 2 and 3 of Delors are certainly no guarantee of low inflation.

It would be better to have competing currencies with the exchange rate mechanism being joined by Britain when certain conditions are met. Those conditions are equitable inflation throughout Europe, the abolition of exchange controls, the completion of all other aspects of the single market—the free movement of goods and services—the abolition of industrial subsidies across the Community, and the removal of legal requirements in the member nation states that pension funds and insurance companies keep their investment at home.

Finally, let me deal with the political aspects of the exchange rate mechanism and monetary union. Jacques Delors wants economic and monetary union because he wants one currency, one monetary policy, one fiscal and one budgetary policy, one macro-economic policy, one Europe—one federal Europe—with one Government in Brussels. The spirit of the treaty of Rome has been hijacked by a new Napoleon—a dirigiste, corporatist, interventionist Napoleon in the best French tradition.

The spirit of the treaty must be regained before we join the European exchange rate mechanism. We want a free trade Europe, not a protectionist and dirigiste Europe. We want a Europe in which there is free movement of goods and services, not silly harmonisation. We have to reassert, through our Ministers in the Council of Ministers, the view that we want less government in the European Community, not more government. We want a Europe that is not federal or centralist but a Europe based on the fine thoughts of my hon. Friend the Member for Ludlow (Mr. Gill) in which the nation states can make positive contributions towards the creation of the single market while co-operating on issues such as pollution which affect us all.

9.12 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The debate has properly concentrated on the wider European scene—inevitably so, given the events in eastern Europe in recent months and particularly in recent days. I hope that I shall not disappoint hon. Members by moving to matters that may seem more prosaic, but it is important to place on record the importance of the role of the social charter in the development of the European Community.

I was interested to note the arrogance of some Conservative Members, who seem still to believe that under the present Government Britain is widely regarded as being at the centre of the intellectual decision-making process in Europe. They are so out of touch with the reality in western Europe and, to a lesser extent, in eastern Europe that they bring our debates into disrepute.

For a long time, the Prime Minister has been determined to place herself at odds with the rest of the Community. Her concept of any new thinking in the Community is so lacking that she can describe the European social charter as being inspired by the values of Marxism and the class struggle. As the Minister of State moves between the class struggle and the role of newspaper boy, I hope that he will tell us whether he believes that Chancellor Kohl and the other heads of European Governments in the Community are inspired by those values. Is it the Goverment's view and that held by the Foreign Office, that Chancellor Kohl is some kind of crypto-Marxist? Do they believe that the German Democratic Republic is inspired by secret yearnings towards Moscow?

That kind of nonsense from the Prime Minister has left Britain completely isolated, particularly with regard to the

social charter. There are 11 Governments in the European Community on one side of the equation and only one, inevitably Britain, on the other side.

Historically, the Prime Minister might have looked towards the West Germans for support within the Community. However, the Germans are actively leading a quest for another nine specific areas of concern to be added to the social charter. They want these areas to be brought forward in terms of EC legislation. Those issues include the right of all workers to have four weeks paid holiday and all workers to be allowed paid public holidays and 14 weeks paid maternity leave. They also include free Government job placement services and minimum security protection in the workplace. That agenda is not being set by the Socialists or the Marxists involved in class struggle in western Europe; it is being set by Chancellor Kohl and the Christian Democrat Governments that surround him geographically and politically.

It is little wonder that the Christian Democrats in Europe have lost all confidence in the Prime Minister. It is little wonder that when the Prime Minister agreed that the Conservative group within the European Parliament should snuggle up to the Christian Democrats, having lost all its other supporters, the Christian Democrats said that they were not terribly interested in that proposition because they did not see any great future in it.

Lord Bethell, the MEP for London, North-West, wrote in *The Times* recently of his great shock when the Christian Democrats decided

"neither to accept us into their group as members, nor even to broaden co-operation with us . . . Yet they prefer to cold-shoulder us, to kick us when we are down".

That sums up the shock and horror of one Conservative MEP. He gave away the game a little when he said:

"They resent the self-confident vigour with which the Prime Minister, representing a country with decades of mediocre economic performance, chides countries like Germany for corporatism and lack of enterprise."

Mrs. Gorman: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lloyd: No. I do not have much time left and the hon. Lady has not been here for most of the debate.

Inevitably, the Prime Minister is now almost completely isolated within Europe on so many issues. The Department of Employment has spent months doing little other than issue press releases on the infamies of the social charter. These have stated that the social charter points in the wrong direction, that it could destroy enterprise and that it is out of tune with Community objectives.

Perhaps we should reflect on what the Minister of State has said about the social charter. He waxed eloquent about the damage that it would do to employment within western Europe. It is odd that only Britain feels that employment would be under such tremendous pressure. That view is not held by the Portuguese, the Italians, the Spanish, the Greeks, or the Danes. The Minister of State said:

"The proposed regulation of working hours, weekend working and shift work would destroy the flexibility which businesses, particularly small businesses, need in order to be competitive and take advantage of the opportunities opened up by 1992."

The Minister obviously had in mind certain classifications of small businesses when he made that point. He went on to say:

"Why should Brussels, for example, make it impossible for youngsters under 16 to do paper rounds?"

The Minister has demonstrated his grasp of the fundamentals of the British economy and of small firms. The threat from Brussels is that, once and for all, the newspaper rounds of Britain will be abolished and cast into the dustbin of history. That comment is extremely silly. Clearly, had the Minister and his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister been prepared to take part in dialogue and in the process of developing a consensus approach to the social charter, the idea that the newspaper rounds of Britain have been threatened would have been as ludicrous to those in Brussels as it is to the Opposition. That is an example of the Government's reluctance to take part in a dialogue. That is why the rest of Europe and the Opposition are totally mystified by the Government's position.

Mr. Marlow: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lloyd: I will not give way, as time is extremely short.

The social charter is accepted by virtually all informed bodies within the European Community.

Mr. Marlow: The Opposition may take a different view on the content of the social charter from the Government. They are entitled to do that. One of the things that we are concerned about on this side is that a social charter, whatever its status appears to be, will actually give more power to European institutions—the European Court and the Brussels Commission—to initiate policies in areas where they cannot currently initiate policies. Does that not worry the hon. Gentleman as well?

Mr. Lloyd: If the hon. Gentleman will bear with me, I will refer to that point when I discuss the Single European Act and the role of majority and unanimous voting. *[Interruption.]* The answer is simple. The Minister may find it difficult to understand, but the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) will probably be able to keep up with me.

The social charter is well accepted throughout Europe. The Minister gave the game away when he had to pray in aid the European Round Table as one of only two bodies which feel even remotely akin to the British Government on this issue. The British Government accepted that there is a role for social legislation when they signed the treaty for the Single European Act. The preamble to the Single European Act states:

"Determined to work together to promote democracy on the basis of the fundamental rights recognised in the constitutions and laws of the Member States, in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the European social charter, notably freedom, equality and social justice."

Social justice was accepted as central to the Single European Act. Social justice can occur only if, along with the single European market, we are prepared to put forward serious proposals to allow for the development of an even playing field in social matters.

Mrs. Gorman: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Lloyd: I will not give way. The hon. Lady must recognise that I do not have time to do so.

Mrs. Gorman: The hon. Gentleman is a chauvinist. He allowed my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) to intervene and refused me twice.

Mr. Lloyd: I have been accused of many things, but chauvinism is not one of them.

[Mr. Lloyd]

The Government are prepared to accept their own social charter. The Secretary of State for Employment is on record as saying that the Government want a social charter. The Secretary of State's social charter apparently accepts that the Government are committed to making progress in employee involvement, but his involvement is the narrowest possible. He claims some great move forward through share ownership by the population. The Secretary of State for Employment said:

"Let me take one example. The British Government is fully committed to making progress on employee involvement. But we believe there is no more effective way of involving employees in the running of their company than for those employees to own shares in their company."

That may be an arguable point, but the number of share owners in this country is slightly lower than the number of people who by any definition are in low-paid work. If the Secretary of State is saying that share ownership is open to the many millions of people whom the Government have cast into low pay, he sadly fails to understand the mechanics of our economy and our society.

It is precisely for this reason that the European Community is right to put forward proposals for a social charter which includes provisions for employment and pay. Britain has a horrendous record on pay. We know that, since the abolition of the wages councils' protection of young people, the number of young people paid less than the former wage councils rate is as high as 75 per cent. of the young work force, and the percentage has increased during the past 12 months. When the Government claim that young peoples' earnings have not plummeted but continued to rise, that claim is at odds with the evidence. The number of people on low pay in this country has increased from 38 per cent. to 47 per cent. of the work force during the past 10 years, so it is no surprise when a demand comes for some form of minimum wage protection.

The Government claim that Germans can afford to suffer some over-regulation in their economy because of its strength. One aspect of the social charter relates specifically to the importance of training in the economies of Britain and Germany. Any comparison between the British economy and, not just the German economy, but other western European economies, shows that the British economy continues to lag behind. When the Secretary of State and the Minister tell the House that we have a credible record on training, that view is not shared, not only by those on YTS and ET schemes, but by many in industry who reject those schemes and compare the position in Britain with that in the Federal Republic of Germany, where spending on training every year is three times that in Britain. That is why there is a demand from many quarters in Britain for a social charter to guarantee adequate and proper training throughout the working life of those involved, particularly throughout the non-working life of those whom the Government still maintain in unemployment.

The social charter inevitably brings forward the debate into which the hon. Member for Northampton, North invited me a few moments ago. It involves a question which I want to pose to the Minister. We have heard many times that it is the Government's intention to take this matter to the European Court if necessary. The social charter contains a number of issues which would not go to the European Court because, under the Single European Act, they can be decided by a simple qualified majority.

I should be pleased if the Minister would comment on these issues, including health and safety legislation which, under the treaty, falls outside the unanimous decision system. There are other issues such as information, consultation and participation which, if the Commission decides to move in a certain direction, could well be put through under the qualified majority voting system. It is important for the Minister to tell the House whether the Government intend to press strongly for those to be decided unanimously and how they intend to insist on that.

In answer to the hon. Member for Northampton, North, the important point is a simple one. The Opposition have always made it clear that we do not want an extension of qualified majority voting. We have made it clear that we believe that the way forward lies in consensus. I shall remind the hon. Gentleman of one central point. As things stand, there is an 11:1 majority in favour of the implementation of the social charter. Eleven states within the European Community are prepared to search for that consensus. The one state which stands alone is the one represented by the Minister.

If a Labour Government were in power in Britain the voting would be unanimous. A Labour Government would search for the sort of consensus to allow us to make progress on the issues worrying the hon. Member for Northampton, North and Opposition Members. That search for consensus is lacking under this Government, but would be available to us, even at the level of looking after newspaper boys. More importantly—this is the thrust of the hon. Gentleman's point—it would be available to us when we come to the concept of subsidiarity. At that point, it would be up to the British Government to negotiate with our Community partners.

We should be clear about this because the Minister of State himself referred to the level of control of the social charter. The reality is that, of itself, the social charter implements nothing. Nothing will come into practice automatically. Every provision will have to be turned into some form of action under the action programme and directives from the Commission. At every stage a Government in Britain who are prepared to co-operate with our Community partners, prepared to look for consensus and to accept the need for a social charter to provide workers as well as employers with a level playing field, would allow a consensus to emerge——

Mr. Marlow *rose*——

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman will have to forgive me: I cannot give way because of the shortage of time.

Mr. Janman *rose*——

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman will have to accept that I do not have the time.

Mr. Janman *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lloyd: A Labour Government committed to that kind of co-operation in Europe would be in a position to ensure a role for Britain in that debate; indeed, that debate could lead to a conclusion that was to the benefit of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Marlow *rose*——

Mr. Janman *rose*——

Mr. Lloyd: I give way to the hon. Member for Northampton, North.

Mrs. Gorman: That is very nice.

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman has said that if the social charter were passed through, a Labour Government would argue and negotiate for subsidiarity under that social charter. The hon. Gentleman seems to be saying that he therefore believes that if the social charter were agreed, it would pass power to other European institutions. That point should be noted by the House.

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman has failed to understand what the social charter is. Of itself, the social charter passes no powers to any other European body. It is a declaration of intent——

Mr. Marlow: The hon. Gentleman must be wet behind the ears.

Mr. Lloyd: Well, the hon. Gentleman may think that I am wet, but he will have to accept that even the Government are arguing that the time to prevent action is under the action programme. As I understand it, that is why the action programme was today delayed in Brussels and has not moved further on. That is the time at which the proper interests of Britain must be protected as far as the provisions directly affect our citizens. That is the time when a Labour Government, involved in those negotiations, would be in a position to obtain the maximum benefit for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maude: That would be signing a blank cheque.

Mr. Lloyd: The Minister says that that would be signing a blank cheque. His point allows me to return to the question that I posed to his colleague the Minister of State at the Department of Employment. Will the Minister of State tell us whether any blank cheques have already been signed under the Single European Act? Will the hon. Gentleman make it clear from the Dispatch Box tonight whether he and his colleagues take the view that no part of the social charter can be forced on this country under the qualified majority voting system of the Single European Act?

If the Minister of State ducks that question, it will not be the Opposition, but the Government, who are accepting that they have already signed a blank cheque. The Minister of State at the Foreign Office may feel that blank cheques are a prerogative of the Opposition, but we want to know —and the nation is entitled to know—whether those blank cheques have already been signed. The signing of a blank cheque may well have taken place when we concurred with the Single European Act, but their continuation and the guarantee that they could be cashed for any amount took place when this Government made a decision—when the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister made a decision —that they would take no role whatsoever in trying to reach a consensus with other Governments in the European Community. That is what makes Britain's position now so stupid and so out of step with everybody else.

It is important that the Minister of State addresses that question. I ask him again, will he answer specifically whether any areas of the social charter will be brought into operation under the qualified majority voting system? That is not a trivial point; it is an important point to which he should respond.

I finish by saying that the mood within the rest of the European Community is clear. It has been summarised already. Under their presidency of the European Council, the French have attempted to make a compromise available to the British Government. However, each time the French have done so, the British Government have rejected the approach. Each time there has been an amendment to the social charter—because there have been amendments and I was sorry to see them emerge—the British Government have spurned those approaches. At every stage, the British Government have made it clear that they want little or nothing to do with the social charter.

Mr. Jean Pierre Cot, the leader of the Socialist group in the European Parliament, spoke for the majority in that Parliament when he said:

"We want 11 signatures on the proposal we have rather than 12 on something that is watered down."

I must make it clear that that is the Opposition's view.

9.35 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. Tim Eggar): We have had a good debate, which has spread across a broad canvas, as we would have expected after the events of last weekend.

I have taken careful note of the remarks made by right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House about the need to consider the scrutiny procedures.

I listened carefully to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Mr. Powell), and I know that my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord President of the Council is in touch with the Scrutiny and Procedure Select Committees about improving arrangements.

Scrutiny is important in the House. My hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and other right hon. and hon. Friends who have been in Europe recently, have explained to their EC colleagues that, for example, in the debate on the European monetary union, there was no dissent in the House about the view which the Government put forward in that debate, when they expressed considerable concern about stages 2 and 3 of the Delors plan. We want that kind of scrutiny and it is the kind that carries weight in the European Community.

There are few of us who did not associate the division of Europe with the epic photograph of an East German border guard jumping over the wire as the wall was built up, some 20 years ago. That was the image which many of us had of a divided Europe.

The image that will remain with many of us of a Europe which is changing dramatically is that of youngsters on top of the Berlin wall and of the people flooding through the gaps in the wall. I shall also remember the interviews with young East Germans, who had been to the West for the first time, and were deliberately returning to their country. They were saying publicly that they had the chance of freedom and that they were positive that they would be able to enjoy it in the future. Therefore, they were returning to East Germany to make a success of their country within the new horizons that had opened up. The events of the weekend were truly dramatic and the images are strong.

Right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House have talked about the reunification of Germany.

[Mr. Tim Eggar]

What is at issue is the right of the people of the German Democratic Republic to choose their future, democratically and in freedom. East Germans are calling for reform and not reunification. What they will ultimately choose we cannot foretell, but surely the first objective must be the pursuit of real self-determination, followed by the building up of democracy.

Chancellor Kohl has stressed the need to remain level-headed and to maintain a sense of perspective. It has long been the aim of successive British Governments and of the Governments of other Western countries to achieve a reunified Germany based on a liberal democracy, linked to the Western community. That has been our objective and it remains our objective.

There has been much discussion about the future relationship between the European Community and eastern European countries. The way in which we respond to individual eastern European countries will depend on their circumstances, and, crucially, on the extent to which they have carried out economic and political reforms. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has emphasised that we must give every possible encouragement to that reform and to the emergence of democracy.

We must look imaginatively at ways in which to develop new forms of association with eastern European countries. Hon. Members have already mentioned a number of existing models of association such as the association agreements with Cyprus and Turkey that confer particular benefits of trade access and financial support. We also have the model of EFTA, which provides free trade access for manufactured goods. None of those existing models is tailor-made to meet the challenges posed by the eastern European countries, but we must work to extract the relevant elements of the existing forms of association and we must build on them to fashion an adequate response.

The Community must support those in eastern Europe who have striven for democracy and reform. I am absolutely confident that the Community will respond to that challenge. Certainly that is the message that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will take to the meeting of Heads of Government in Paris next Saturday.

Mr. Cash: I endorse what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said about a united states of Europe, which is in line with everything she has said about the issue in the past few years. My hon. Friend referred to what Chancellor Kohl said about a united states of Europe. Does he agree it is possible to equate the united states of Europe with the idea of self-determination for the people of Eastern and Western Germany?

Mr. Eggar: My hon. Friend tempts me down a number of avenues and I am not entirely sure which one he would like me to follow. I have listened to the debate tonight and it is clear that there are a number of different possibilities. We are living in a time of tremendous change and opportunity. We should not spend too much time speculating, but we should look imaginatively and constructively at those opportunities when they emerge. I am sure that we shall see many important moves in the coming months.

Mr. Robertson *rose*——

Mr. Eggar: No, I shall not give way.

It is not for the Community to shape events in eastern Europe, but the strength of the Community will help us to support and to encourage eastern European countries through critical times. Before we get too mesmerised by the debate about the future structure and development of Europe we would do well to remember for a moment the external economic challenges that face western Europe. If we are to assist in the development of eastern Europe, we must first ensure that we are equipped to compete worldwide.

We must remember that the current Community unemployment rate still stands at more than 9 per cent. compared to the United States unemployment rate of 5·3 per cent. We must consider relative economic growth records. Since 1985 the Pacific basin economy has grown by 20 per cent. whereas that of the Community has grown by 12 per cent. only.

The challenge will not get any easier. Between now and 2010 the population of the Third world will grow 45 per cent., that of the United States will grow by 17 per cent., that of Japan will grow by 8 per cent., but the European Community population will grow by a mere 2 per cent. The prospects for the 1990s are that the Community will be faced with a static labour market and will be competing against the low-cost, labour-intensive economies of the far east and elsewhere. That is the scale of the challenge facing us in the 1990s and such is the record that we have achieved in the past four years. When we talk about assistance for eastern Europe let us recognise the scale of the challenge that we have already faced in the Community.

As my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office has said, we want a prosperous and thriving Community, which, through deregulation and increased competitiveness, creates jobs and reduces unemployment. That is the Community we have already begun to build, a Community in which Britain is so often helping to set the agenda.

All members of the Community are committed to the single market. But as my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) said, Britain is forcing the pace. We have opened up our markets in banking, insurance, and telecommunications. The depth of our commitment to Europe and to the people of Europe is clear from the way in which we have played a leading role on adoption of single market measures. We have no intention of dragging our feet on those vital issues. Efficient and expanding firms create jobs and prosperity.

Successful enterprise provides improvements in living standards, working conditions and social protection in every country. That is the message at the heart of the social dimension of the single market, and the message that the people of eastern Europe have heard and responded to dramatically. The single market means giving the wealth creators of Europe the chance to create wealth for the people of Europe. Yet some people present the single market as a charter for business, not for people. That is not our view or that of any Community country. All 12 member states share the objective of improving people's living and working conditions through the completion of the single market. They all want to see the market work, because that is the best way to ensure that the people of Europe benefit from improved standards of living and wider choice.

Britain strongly supports Community action to recognise each other's product standards, to remove outdated regulations which restrict the ability of firms to establish themselves in new markets and, importantly, to enable individuals to take advantage of the new opportunities that the single market will offer.

The Community has agreed on how we see Europe developing and that the way forward is not through imposed harmonisation, but through cross-fertilisation of ideas, approaches and experiences. In other words, we share a vision of diversity within a framework of common goals. We should remember that vision when we consider the proposed social charter.

I stress to Opposition Members that we have never said that we could not accept a charter. We have said categorically that we cannot accept the charter in the form proposed by the Commission. The present draft charter ignores the unanimous agreement of the Madrid summit that any action in the social area should take account of differences in member states' national practices and traditions. In trying to impose uniform arrangements, it ignores member states social systems, developed over the years to suit their own circumstances. We do not want to impose our systems on other member states and we do not see why other member states' systems should be imposed on us, particularly in the light of the Madrid conclusions. We believe that by increasing regulations, the charter will raise costs and lead directly to job losses.

To answer the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd), we welcome parts of the draft social charter and support them as a statement of agreed objectives and a commitment to further progress. Those include measures to promote freedom of movement, commitment to the principle of equal opportunities and treatment for all, further progress on health and safety at work and measures to assist the integration into working life of people with disabilities. We have always made it clear that we have no difficulty with those aspects of the social charter. But taken as a whole, and even with the changes that have been made during discussions, the charter remains a deeply flawed document. It seeks to impose harmonisation where diversity is critical to the success of Europe.

What does the charter mean for British people? Ms. Papandreou said in London that she

"cannot believe that people would choose part-time work."

In other words she does not think that there is any value in part-time work. She is wrong—6 million people in this country choose to work part-time because they want to, not because they have to. The hon. Member for Stretford shakes his head, but that is the view of his party, although he may not recognise it. The Labour party's policy review claims:

"rigid work patterns ... deny people choice and opportunity".

Amen to that.

Does the Labour party believe it helpful to deny older children opportunities of Saturday jobs or work experience at school? Does it believe that a 17-year-old who wants to put in a few hours' overtime should be banned from doing so, or that an adult worker who wants to work and save for a family holiday should be limited to a few hours' overtime each week, whatever the wishes of his employer? Is that what the Labour party supports? It is what the social charter means——

Mr. Tony Lloyd: Where does it say that?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Members for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) and for Stretford both said that they were not happy with the social charter because it did not go far enough. How many more restrictions do they want to put on the people of this country? How many more jobs do they want to be lost?

The social charter seeks to impose a legally binding minimum wage, which I am sure Opposition Members will welcome. They have said publicly that they want such a wage set at 50 per cent. of male median earnings. Like the Commission, the Opposition have not estimated what the effect of a minimum wage at that level would be. We have done a little work; we have analysed the economic impact of the minimum wage proposed by the Opposition. It would lead to the loss of about 750,000 jobs. The Commission and the Opposition support that proposal, but they should reconsider their support for it.

The draft social charter seeks to ban the closed shop. We would welcome the intention behind that, but we do not think that the Commission should have a role in deciding Britain's industrial relations legislation. The article of the social charter would be wholly incompatible with the closed shop legislation of the last Labour Government. I remind the House that that legislation resulted in hundreds of people being sacked from their jobs without a penny of compensation merely because they refused to be dragooned into joining a trade union.

I trust that the hon. Member for Stretford will make it clear where his party stands on the closed shop. He says that he supports the social charter, so he supports an end to the closed shop. In that case, why has he not supported my colleagues taking the Employment Bill through the House? Can the Opposition give a categorical assurance that if we brought legislation forward to deal with a pre-entry closed shop they would support it? What do the Opposition believe? Do they believe in the social charter, or in the policy on the closed shop that they have pursued ever since the disgraceful days of the mid-1970s?

Other articles in the charter would mean the virtual end of legitimate limitations on strikes and would go further to protect the rights of strikers than the Labour party has ever gone when in Government. For example, secret ballots before strikes, which the Labour party now claims to support, curbs on secondary action and limits on picketing would all have to be abandoned under the social charter. If we agreed to the draft of the social charter, almost all the trade union reforms that we have implemented since 1979, and which have been widely supported by the people, would be overturned.

There is a case for a discussion about the form of employment law that we want. The right place to have that discussion is across the Floor of the House. It should not be imposed by some entity in Brussels.

Let us take another subject—employee involvement. The charter presents us with a choice between the German, the French or the Dutch models. We have a different approach. For us, successful employee involvement is best developed on the basis of voluntary agreement.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: Is that approach better?

Mr. Eggar: I wish the hon. Gentleman would think before he interrupts. The three models offered by the social charter would be as unacceptable to the Labour party as

[Mr. Eggar]

they are to the Government. The hon. Gentleman's previous boss, the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), made that quite clear when he wrote in *Tribune:* "a top priority must be . . . that worker representatives . . . can choose whichever option for power-sharing they believe will assist them to control their working environment". There is no scope within the social charter for "choosing whichever option". The only choice is between the German, French or Dutch models. That part of the social charter is no more acceptable to the Labour party than it is to the Conservative party.

I notice that Labour Members are keeping very quiet. I put a serious question to them. What will the Labour party choose? Will it choose to create jobs or will it choose the social charter, which will destroy jobs? Will it choose to support its own stated approach to industrial relations or will it choose the social charter? Will it choose to support flexible forms of employee involvement or the social charter? Will it choose to support the Labour party's policy review, or the social charter?

The Government are quite clear about our objectives. We have made our view on the social charter clear from the beginning, but the Opposition spokesmen have said that they are not in favour of the social charter only because it does not go far enough. They have not bothered to look at what the social charter includes and how that relates to their policy.

Mr. Lloyd: I have here a copy of the social charter. Can the Minister show me those parts of it that justify anything that he has said in the past 10 minutes?

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman simply has not read it.

Mr. Lloyd: Show me where they are.

Mr. Eggar: The hon. Gentleman has not denied that my interpretation of the social charter is correct. I have been prepared to give way to him so that he can deny that there is a distinct difference between what he says that he will support in the social charter and the policies that his party espouses in practice.

The Community has agreed on our priority—it is the creation of jobs for the people of Europe. The social charter will not create jobs. It will destroy them.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of the White Paper, Developments in the European Community January-June 1989 (Cm. 801).

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c

Northern Ireland

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)

That the draft Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 25th July, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Question agreed to.

Industrial Organisation and Development

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)

That the draft Apple and Pear Development Council (Dissolution) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 17th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Question agreed to.

Industrial Organisation and Development

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)

That the draft Apple and Pear Research Council Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 17th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Question agreed to.

Industrial Training

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)

That the draft Industrial Training Levy (Hotel and Catering) Order 1989, which was laid before this House on 18th October, be approved.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

Question agreed to.

Mrs. Patricia Mary Moore

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Sackville.]*

10 pm

Mr. Richard Holt (Langbaurgh): In some ways it is apposite that I should have the last Adjournment debate in the current Session, although the case of the late Mrs. Moore goes back much further than that.

Mr. Leslie Moore and his son came to see me in my surgery four years ago, in January 1986. His wife had been assessed by the medical appeals tribunal as being 35 per cent. disabled. Her claims for allowances were thus disallowed, except on that basis. Mrs. Moore appealed against that assessment. Her appeal was lodged on 24 September 1986. She was not examined until 8 July 1986 and she died on 6 December 1986. Mrs. Moore died before her appeal against the tribunal's decision could be heard. Perhaps everybody thought that the case would die with Mrs. Moore, but they reckoned without Mr. Moore who was not prepared to allow that to happen. He felt, in honour of his wife and son, that an injustice had been done and he wanted the case to be pursued. He came to see me to ensure that it was pursued.

We appealed in January 1987. Somehow, that appeal was mislaid in the works. In April 1987 Mr. Moore attended a hearing in Newcastle. After he had attended that hearing, lo and behold, his wife's medical condition was determined to be 80 per cent. disabled, but not all the way back to July when she was examined—only from 1 September.

My right hon. Friend the Minister of State will recall that at that time I wrote and asked who picked on 1 September—why not 2 September or 30 August? How could they know, on a hypothetical date after someone had died, that the disability had changed from 35 per cent. to 80 per cent.? That was the wisdom of the medical practitioners who conducted the hearing and reached these decisions.

Mr. Moore was still not satisfied. Nor was I. Therefore we pursued the matter still further. We have now reached the stage where Mr. Moore has been granted 80 per cent. for the period when Mrs. Moore was alive, but only after 1 September 1986.

I reckoned that the tribunal's decision was complacent and arrogant. I wrote accordingly to my right hon. Friend. He replied saying that we could appeal further. He said that it was not a DSS matter but a matter for the medical appeal tribunal. Imagine how Mr. Moore felt as a recently widowed gentleman with a young son in a depressed area in the north-east of England. He could not understand why he was being shoved from pillar to post, and as the person who was supposed to be helping and guiding him, I must confess that I was just as dizzy. But we were told that the MAT was administered by the office of the president of the social security and medical appeals tribunal. So I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 1 June 1987, asking him to look into the case on our behalf.

One year later on 8 June 1988, I again wrote to my right hon. Friend reminding him that 12 months earlier he had written to Mr. Justice Byrt QC, the president of the tribunal, placing the case before him. But the Minister's reply on 30 June said that there was no trace of Mr. Moore's claim for attendance allowances. He promised to follow up the president's office to determine what investigations had been made.

On 18 July we sent to the Department details of Mrs. Moore's claim for the attendance allowance which had come to the surface. On 5 September 1988, all that long time later, Mr. Justice Byrt replied that on the balance of probabilities Mrs. Moore might have been severely disabled, and on the evidence that was available she would have a right of appeal to a social security commissioner.

We thought that we were getting somewhere. But there was only one small snag. The social security commissioner, in his infinite wisdom, decided not to grant my constituent right of appeal.

In September 1988, having received that decision, we had to ask to have it set aside. In January 1989 we received a letter from the secretary of the office of the president. The papers had been sent to his office on 28 September 1988 but extensive inquiries in Leeds and Newcastle revealed no trace of Mr. Moore's set-aside application, the implication being that it had been lost in the post. It was bad enough to lose the appeal without the information being lost in the post, but we resurrected it, got it back to the surface and pursued it further. We sent photocopies of all the information to those who had lost it.

In February 1989, I received a letter from Mr. Moore saying that he still had not heard, so on 2 March I wrote again to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State asking him to bring pressure to bear on that bureaucratic quango which appears to be responsible to nobody and able to do or not to do whatever it wishes. My right hon. Friend replied immediately saying that tribunals were independent and it would be wrong for him as a Minister to seek to bring pressure to bear on them because he could be criticised for so doing.

On 29 March 1989 we knew that we had been refused and the only course of action was to apply to the social security commissioner for leave to appeal, and that had to be done within 42 days. We checked it at our office at the House of Commons because we were no longer satisfied with the competence of the people who were charged with that responsibility. We were told that it had been dealt with expeditiously. That was on 12 April.

On 16 August Mr. Moore again telephoned me to say that he had heard nothing and I again contacted my right hon. Friend's office to ask whether anything could be done to bring some compensation, or at least some consolation to my constituent in respect of his late wife who had been dead for some considerable time, yet as far as he was concerned, the case was still alive.

On 8 August, Mr. Moore was told that the case would be heard in four weeks and that Judge Bromley would decide it, but on 6 November—a little more than four weeks later—Mr. Moore again rang my office to say that nothing had been heard.

At that stage, I took advantage of an hon. Member's right to initiate an Adjournment debate on the subject. Lo and behold, the day after your Office, Mr. Speaker, informed me that I had succeeded in obtaining an Adjournment debate, my constituent received a reply saying that he had been given leave to appeal. Was that not miraculous? We still have not an affirmative judgment in our favour, although the amount of money involved is very small. However, it involves a big point of principle.

I am raising this matter tonight because my constituent cannot be the only person who has been treated in this

[Mr. Richard Holt]

abominable way by those charged with the responsibility of ensuring that tribunals and justice are dealt with expeditiously and that no one is kept hanging around.

I received a further letter today, which I shall read so that it is on the record. It comes from a high source. It says:

"I write to apologise to you directly"—

the letter is to my constituent, but this is my copy—

"for the very regrettable delay at the Office of the Social Security Commissioners in dealing with your application for leave to appeal to a Social Security Commissioner. Let me explain how the delay came about.

OSSC received your application for leave initially in February 1989, but I understand they were obliged to ask you for a copy of the decision of the lower tribunal"—

That is the letter that was lost by somebody else—

"after which they returned the application for leave to lower tribunal on 15 March 1989 because it could be dealt with by the lower tribunal's Chairman within the 3-month time limit allowed for applications for leave to appeal. The Chairman of the lower tribunal refused your application for leave on 21 March, after which the papers returned to OSSC. In April, OSSC requested all the necessary background papers from DSS and the local tribunal's office in Redcar. All the papers were received at OSSC on 10 May, but at this point things went wrong".

This is on 10 May 1989, but I have been pursuing the matter since 1986.

"What should have happened is that OSSC staff should have made up a complete file and put it, with your application, to a Commissioner for a decision. Unfortunately, instead OSSC clerical staff misfiled the papers, putting them away in a registry where files are held pending the receipt of further papers which are expected from the DSS or the lower tribunal.

The error was only discovered on 10 November, when my Department and OSSC first became aware of your case as a result of the intervention of your Member of Parliament, Mr. Holt, who will raise the matter at an Adjournment Debate on 15 November. As soon as OSSC realised their error, they constructed a case file and put it before a Commissioner, who considered your application for leave to appeal and granted it. I am advised that notification of that decision was sent to you on 10 November by first class post. Thus, the way is now open to you to proceed with the appeal in the usual way.

I very much regret the anxiety and distress that this long and unnecessary delay must have caused you—all the more so, because it concerns an appeal on behalf of your late wife. Unfortunately, mistakes of this sort do sometimes occur and I know that the staff at OSSC are very sorry for what went wrong. The work very hard and appreciate the importance of their work to appellants and their families. On their behalf, I apologise to you again most sincerely and I trust the appeal will now proceed smoothly.

I should add that I am most grateful to your Member of Parliament for bringing the matter to our attention so that it could be sorted out quickly. Therefore, I am sending him a copy of this letter."

That was signed by Lord Mackay of Clashfern.

We cannot have a more fulsome apology from a more senior person in Government. Is it not disgraceful that I have had to raise this matter on the Adjournment after all this time and that the medical evidence which is the subject of this appeal to some extent cannot be verified in any way? Doctors have to say whether another doctor has made a mistake. Doctors do not do that—doctors never make mistakes. The report of 8 August 1986 stated that the chest condition would deteriorate at some future date. The doctor was right. Six or seven weeks later, after the fourth course of chemotherapy, my constituent—who was still assessed as only 35 per cent. disabled—died.

I hope that there will be three happy postscripts to this saga. I shall be able to remove this file from my live files. Mr. Moore will be given that small sum of money covering that period during his wife's severe illness, and he will be able to put his file away. With your leave, Mr. Speaker, we will wish Mr. Moore well, because he remarried last weekend. We want to put this matter behind us and wish him well for the future. I realise that my right hon. Friend the Minister cannot answer all my points because the matter is sub judice. This use of bureaucracy to befuddle people must not happen again. Most people would have dropped the case by now. Mr. Moore deserves justice. I hope that he will receive it.

10.16 pm

The Minister for Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Scott): My hon. the Member for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) has recounted what all those listening will recognise as a sad and, in many ways, very unsatisfactory story. That it started four years ago and is still unresolved is distressing for Mr. Moore, who is the person most directly concerned.

Looking at the matter from my point of view, independent of the social security commissioners' office, I like to think that, although this may not be the only case that has gone so badly wrong, it would be exceptional for any case to go quite as wrong at this one has. I hope that my hon. Friend will recognise that the letter that he has received from the Lord Chancellor will be regarded, in the administration of these matters, as something that Lord Chancellors rarely have to produce even for such distinguished Back Benchers as my hon. Friend. Lessons will be learned throughout the organisation about the importance of delivering a more effective service than was delivered in this case.

I reiterate the gratitude that the Lord Chancellor expressed in his letter, when he said that he was grateful to my hon. Friend for bringing the matter to his attention so that it could be sorted out quickly. It is in my interests and the Government's interests that those who are entitled to benefits get them and that if matters are to be settled independently of Ministers—as they must be when medical conditions are involved—they are at least managed expeditiously. I acknowledge that in this case that has not happened.

My hon. Friend acknowledged in his closing remarks that tribunals have to manage these matters. One cannot establish essentially medical criteria to entitle someone to receive a benefit—whether mobility allowance, attendance allowance or, as in this case, severe disability allowance—and establish a medical body to make the decision and then have Ministers who are not qualified trample all over it. It would be nonsense to do that, as I know that my hon. Friend recognises.

My hon. Friend has recounted much of the story, but perhaps I may tell it from the point of view of those on this side of the fence although, as I have said, it does not bring much credit to the workings of the system. The benefit that Mrs. Moore was claiming was severe disablement allowance and there are various criteria that have to be satisfied if a person is to be successful in such a claim.

A person must have been incapable of work for a continuous period of 28 weeks. Additionally, a person who claims after reaching the age of 20 needs to be assessed as being at least 80 per cent. disabled for the whole of this qualifying period. I gather from the records that the late

Mrs. Moore last worked on 31 October 1985 and claimed severe disablement allowance on 4 April 1986, which is when my hon. Friend began his story. Her local social security office, which deals with claims for the allowance, properly arranged for the claim to be referred to an independent adjudicating medical practitioner to assess her degree of disablement.

Arrangements were made for her to be medically examined for this purpose on 16 June but, unfortunately, she was unable to attend. New arrangements had to be made and the examination took place on 8 July. The adjudicating medical practitioner assessed her degree of disablement at 35 per cent. and a notification that her claim had been disallowed was issued on 22 July. That may not have been a satisfactory outcome, but at least at that point everything was proceeding with some promptness.

We recognise that these decisions cannot be simply referred to Ministers and the way in which decisions can be challenged is through the independent appeal system. Mrs. Moore's appeal to a medical appeal tribunal was received on 1 September and the relevant papers, with the Department's observations on them, were sent to the tribunal on 24 September. It was thought that the tribunal might need additional medical information to help it with is assessment. Case notes were then requested from hospitals where Mrs. Moore had been treated. Extracts from those notes were made by a medical officer on 16 October and these were approved by the tribunal on 5 November. That was still reasonable progress.

The tribunal was held on 14 April 1987 and it decided to assess Mrs. Moore as being 80 per cent. disabled from 1 September 1986. Unfortunately, no benefit was payable as a result of that decision due to the fact that the assessment had not run for the continuous 28-week qualifying period by the time of Mrs. Moore's sad death on 6 December 1986. I can well appreciate that Mr. Moore found this decision very disappointing. I should put it higher than that and say that he found it extremely distressing.

In June 1988 my hon. Friend raised the matter with the then Under-Secretary of State and, following inquiries within his organisation, judge Byrt, the president of the social security appeal tribunals and medical appeal tribunals, wrote on 5 September 1988 to explain that Mr. Moore had been advised of his right either to apply to have the tribunal decision set aside or to appeal to the social security commissioner, but that no such application had been received. Mr. Moore applied to have the decision set aside on 28 September 1988 and, on that same day, his application was forwarded to the regional chairman's office in Leeds. As my hon. Friend will know, it was not until he again made representations that it was realised that the application had been lost between London and Leeds. The president's office wrote to my hon. Friend on 13 January apologising for the delay and arranged for a tribunal to consider the application on 20 February 1989. In the event, the tribunal refused the application. Mr. Moore was notified of that and was advised of his right to seek leave to appeal to the commissioner.

I turn now to the involvement of the office of the social security commissioners in this case. The commissioners are the responsibility of the Lord Chancellor, as my hon. Friend made clear he realised when he read out the letter from my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. Moore applied on 24 February 1989 for leave to appeal to the commissioner against the medical appeal tribunal decision, but he omitted to send a copy of the tribunal decision. He was asked to produce it and, it was realised that the decision was within the three-month time limit enabling leave to be granted by the tribunal chairman. The tribunal chairman refused leave on 21 March 1989, after which the papers were returned to the commissioner's office. Efforts were then made to retrieve them. Some of them had been destroyed by the tribunal office and eventually our Department of Social Security office in Redcar produced a complete set of the original papers, which were received at the commissioner's office on 10 May 1989.

At this point, something went very seriously wrong. A file should have been made up and put before a commissioner promptly for him to make a decision. Unfortunately, the clerk misfiled the case papers into a holding registry where case files sit pending receipt of further papers. This error was not discovered until 10 November 1989—a date of special significance to my hon. Friend—when the Lord Chancellor's Department was first made aware of this evening's debate.

My hon.Friend may take some comfort from the fact that the case was put before a commissioner on the afternoon of 10 November and that leave has been granted. In an attempt to speed things along, observations have been requested within 21 days instead of 30 days as is normal. I am advised that notification of this decision was sent to Mr. Moore on that day, and the way is now open for the appeal to be considered by the commissioner in the normal way.

The Lord Chancellor, on behalf of the office of the social security commissioner, has asked me publicly to reiterate the apology that was conveyed to my hon. Friend in writing for this most unfortunate delay in dealing with Mr. Moore's application for leave. Although there have been some delays at the commissioner's office in dealing with such matters—caused by the significant increase in the work load and the number of appeals over the past 18 months—the delay in this case was caused by a clerical error which, when discovered, was dealt with with great promptness.

The Lord Chancellor has also asked me to thank my hon. Friend for raising the matter and to say that he has written personally to Mr. Moore to apologise. It was generous of my hon. Friend to acknowledge the heartfelt and generous nature of the apology that he received from my noble Friend. I can but add my apologies to those of my noble Friend for the problems that Mr. Moore has experienced in this distressing case. I cannot, of course, predict the outcome of an appeal—my hon. Friend would not expect me to do so—but our apologies are heartfelt.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-seven minutes past Ten o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 16 November 1989

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners: The House went:—and, having returned:

Royal Assent

10.8 am

Mr. Speaker: I have to acquaint the House that the House has been to the House of Peers where a Commission under the Great Seal was read, authorising the Royal Assent to the following Acts:

Brunei (Appeals) Act 1989
Football Spectators Act 1989
Employment Act 1989
Self-Governing Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 1989
Companies Act 1989
Children Act 1989
Local Government and Housing Act 1989
Statute Law (Repeals) Act 1989
Opticians Act 1989
Prisons (Scotland) Act 1989
Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Act 1989
Midland Metro Act 1989
International Westminster Bank Act 1989
British Railways (Penalty Fares) Act 1989

Prorogation

HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH

Mr. Speaker: I have further to acquaint the House that the Lord High Chancellor, one of the Lord Commissioners, delivered Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech to both Houses of Parliament, in pursuance of Her Majesty's Command. For greater accuracy, I have obtained a copy and also directed that the terms of the speech be printed in the Votes and Proceedings. Copies are being made available in the Vote Office.

The Gracious Speech was as follows:

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

The Duke of Edinburgh and I were pleased to receive the State Visits of His Excellency the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Mrs. Babangida in May and His Highness the President of the United Arab Emirates in July. We were pleased to receive the visit in June of Her Majesty The Queen of the Netherlands and His Royal Highness Prince Claus of the Netherlands to mark the conclusion of the William and Mary Tercentenary. We were also pleased to receive His Excellency the General Secretary and President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Mrs. Gorbachev in April, and the President of the United States of America and Mrs. Bush in June.

We recall with pleasure our visit to Barbados in March to mark the 350th Anniversary of the House of Assembly there. We remember with satisfaction our State Visits last month to Singapore and Malaysia, where I was also present on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

My Government have continued to play an active role in the important improvement which has taken place in relations between East and West, and particularly in the negotiations which led to the successful conclusion of the Vienna Review Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

My Government have welcomed and encouraged the significant and liberalising changes which have taken place in Poland and Hungary, and in the Soviet Union.

My Government have continued to improve the United Kingdom's defences. They have played a full part in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and have promoted United Kingdom and Western security interests outside the NATO area.

My Government have continued to work for the achievement of balanced and verifiable arms control agreements. They have played a full part in the Vienna negotiations on reducing conventional forces in Europe and in the talks in Geneva on the abolition of chemical weapons. They have continued to co-operate with the United States over the removal of cruise missiles from the United Kingdom under the terms of the treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union on intermediate range nuclear forces.

My Government have continued to play a full and active role in progress towards the completion of the European Community's single market, and have encouraged business to prepare for the opportunities and challenges that this presents. They have, with our European Community partners, reaffirmed their commitment to the progressive realisation of economic and monetary union, and agreed that its first stage should begin on 1 July 1990. They have, with our European Community partners, established a Court of

[Mr. Speaker]

First Instance attached to the European Court of Justice. They have continued to play a full part in multilateral negotiations designed to liberalise international trade.

My Government have welcomed the completion of the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, and have continued to work for the restoration of that country's independence and non-aligned status. They have contributed to the implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibian independence.

My Government have welcomed the return of Pakistan to the Commonwealth.

My Government have maintained a substantial overseas aid programme to developing countries, including emergency assistance to alleviate the effects of natural disasters in many parts of the world.

My Government have continued their vigorous efforts to combat international terrorism. They have signed, subject to ratification, a new United Nations convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. They have concluded reciprocal agreements or arrangements with a further seven Governments to combat trafficking in drugs.

My Government, together with our Western partners, have taken measures to express their concern at the suppression of the democracy movement in China. They have worked to restore confidence in Hong Kong, building on the foundation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. My Government have stood by their commitment to the people of the Falkland Islands, while making good progress in normalising relations with Argentina.

Members of the House of Commons

I thank you for the provision which you have made for the honour and dignity of the Crown and for the public service.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government have continued to pursue firm financial policies designed to bear down on inflation and to foster the conditions necessary for sustained economic growth. They have made a public sector debt repayment for the second successive year, thus permanently reducing the cost of debt service. National output and living standards have continued to increase, and the number of people out of work has fallen further.

As part of my Government's programme to improve incentives and the performance of the economy, employees' national insurance contributions have been reformed and reduced and the taxation of life assurance and pensions has been reformed.

Legislation has been enacted to improve water quality and the water environment, to establish the National Rivers Authority and to provide for the sale of the utility functions of the water authorities in England and Wales. An Act has been passed to provide for the sale of the electricity supply industry in Great Britain. These measures continue my Government's programme of encouraging greater industrial efficiency and promoting wider share ownership.

Measures have been passed to improve the law on companies, mergers and financial services.

Legislation has been enacted to abolish royalties on post-1982 oil and gas fields in the Southern basin and onshore, and to enable my Government to give effect to the United Kingdom-Irish agreement on the delimitation of the Continental Shelf.

An Act has been passed to end the statutory regulation of dock work.

Legislation has been enacted further to promote sex equality in employment and to remove outdated restrictions on the employment of young people.

An Act has been passed to reform the law on the conduct of local authority business, on local government capital and housing finance, and on the repair and improvement of the housing stock.

An Act has been passed to counter hooliganism at football matches in this country and abroad.

The Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 has been re-enacted with strengthened provisions to curtail the funding of terrorist activity.

An Act has been passed to reform and replace section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911.

Legislation has been enacted to place the Security Service on a statutory basis under the authority of the Secretary of State.

An Act has been passed to extend the entitlement of British citizens living overseas to vote in parliamentary elections held here, and to increase the limit on candidates' expenses in United Kingdom parliamentary by-elections.

Acts have been passed to improve the law governing the care and protection of children in England and Wales, and to regulate arrangements for human organ transplants.

Legislation has been enacted to modify the driver licensing system and to provide for new systems giving route guidance to drivers.

In Northern Ireland, my Government have continued their efforts to combat terrorism, and to promote economic development. They have maintained constructive relations with the Republic of Ireland. Acts have been passed to strengthen the law on fair employment, and to extend the franchise for local elections and require from candidates a declaration against terrorism.

For Scotland, legislation has been enacted to privatise the Scottish Bus Group and to extend parental choice in education by establishing arrangements for schools to be managed outside local authority control.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may attend you.

Thereafter a Commission for proroguing the Parliament was read, after which the Lord Chancellor said:

"My Lords and Members of the House of Commons, By virtue of Her Majesty's Commission which has now been read we do, in Her Majesty's name, and in obedience to Her Majesty's Commands, prorogue this Parliament to Tuesday the twenty-first day of this instant November, to be then here holden, and this Parliament is accordingly prorogued to Tuesday the twenty-first day of this instant November."

End of the Second Session (opened on 22 November 1988) of the Fiftieth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in the Thirty-Eighth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 13 November 1989

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Iraq (Arms)

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what investigations his Department has undertaken into the Matrix Churchill company and the possibility that the company is supplying parts to Iraq which could be used in ballistic missile development.

Mr. Redwood: All export licence applications are examined carefully. I have no reason to believe that the company has contravened United Kingdom export controls.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what efforts he is making to prevent Iraq from acquiring in Britain defence technology which could be used to develop the Condor 2 ballistic missile.

Mr. Redwood: The Export of Goods (Control) Order includes items controlled in accordance with the United Kingdom's obligations under the missile technology control regime. Applications for licences to export controlled goods are carefully considered by the Departments concerned with a view to preventing exports to undesirable end users.

Foreign Exchange Transactions

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will ask the director of the Office of Fair Trading to investigate the disparity between the margins quoted by the banks for commercial foreign exchange transactions and tourist foreign exchange transactions.

Mr. Forth: I am not aware of any concern on this matter, but if the right hon. Member has any evidence of anti-competitive behaviour by banks he should bring it to the attention of the Director General of Fair Trading.

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Department has a programme of review of activities for possible relocation away from London and the south-east and the north-west is always considered along with other possible locations. We have no plans for relocation of units to the north-west of England at present. Announcements will be made as decisions are taken.

Paper and Board Industry

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the measures he is taking to assist the British paper and board industry.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: There are no assistance schemes specific to the paper and board industry as such, but companies in this, as in other sectors of the economy, may be eligible for assistance under various pan-sectoral schemes.

EC Telecommunications Directive

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why agreement was not reached on the European Community telecommunications directive known as the open market provision on 7 November; whether Her Majesty's Government have assessed the proposals to be restrictive; and if he will make a statement on the procedures now to be adopted by the Commission under article 90 of the treaty of Rome.

Mr. Forth: Proposals for a Commission directive under article 90 of the treaty and Council directive on a framework for open network provision (ONP) of telecommunications services were the principal items for discussion at the Telecommunications Council on 7 November.

The issue raised by the article 90 directive is whether the internal market in telecommunications is to be a liberal one or not. The aim of the directive under article 90 is to introduce competition into the Community market for all kinds of telecommunications services with the exception of network infrastructure and voice telephony. A majority of member states wish to limit the scope of the liberalisation envisaged in this directive. The Government strongly support the directive's policy, but have certain reservations about its legal base. The conclusions reached by the European Court of Justice in the case currently before it in respect of an article 90 directive issued in May 1988 on telecommunications terminal equipment will be relevant in this context.

Member states did not reach a common position on ONP because a significant minority including the United Kingdom, while acknowledging that the proposal as revised after consideration by the European Parliament is a substantial improvement on the original proposal, believe that further amendment is necessary to secure the right balance between harmonisation and liberalisation.

Company Directors (Disqualification)

Mr. Trotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many directors have been disqualified from holding office in each year since the present law was introduced as a result of their conduct in connection with the management of an insolvent company; and how many cases are pending.

Mr. Redwood: Since 28 April 1986 the Secretary of State has obtained the following orders under what is now section 6 of the Company Directors Disqualifcation Act 1986, based on reports from practitioners and official receivers in insolvency proceedings.

	Orders obtained (Directors)	*Awaiting hearing at 31 October 1989 (Directors)*
28 April 1986 to 30 April 1987	30	—
1 May 1987 to 30 April 1988	148	—
1 May 1988 to 30 April 1989	286	—
1 May 1989 to 31 October 1989	124	385
TOTAL	588	—

Framework Programme

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress is being made in the framework programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* I have been asked to reply.

I represented the United Kingdom meetings of the EC Council of Research Ministers on 18 September and 17 October which examined the Commission's proposal for a new framework programme for Community research and development for 1990-94. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 2 November 1989 at *Hansard* column *274*. The Council of Ministers is next due to consider the proposal on 15 December and further information will be given to the House following that Council.

Import Licensing (Relocation)

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will relocate the import licensing branch of his Department to Billingham in Cleveland.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[pursuant to his reply, 23 October 1989, c. 294]:* A recent study of location options for the import licensing branch concluded that it could operate effectively and at less cost away from London. I have therefore decided that ILB will be relocated to Billingham in Cleveland by the end of 1990 when the lease on the building it currently occupies in central London expires.

The move will absorb some of the staff no longer needed to run the regional development grants scheme at the Department's office in Cleveland and some local recruitment will also be necessary in order to fill the 53 posts which will be transferred.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Attorney-General if he has had any representations concerning allegations that police officers were not co-operating with the Crown prosecution service; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Representations have occasionally been made during my visits to Crown prosecution service areas that some individual police officers had not displayed a co-operative attitude towards the service, particularly when it had just been established. The Association of Chief Police Officers has always given public and private support to the service. As an independent prosecuting service established by statute, the Crown prosecution service of course should receive the proper co-operation of the police service. I am satisfied that in general it does receive it, and that any lack of co-operation on the part of individual police officers would be exceptional.

Legal Aid

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Attorney-General whether he will make a statement about elegibility for legal aid.

The Attorney-General: The Government have been considering eligibility for legal aid in relation to particular proceedings in the course of reviewing the arrangements for civil and family justice. They now propose to carry out a general review of all the financial conditions for the grant of legal aid.

It is essential to view need in relation to particular types of proceedings in order to identify those who are prevented by lack of means from bringing or defending proceedings, where it is otherwise reasonable that they should. It is not sufficient for this purpose simply to estimate the percentage of the population who might be eligible for legal aid.

The Government have already considered the arrangements for legal aid in care proceedings and action has been taken in the context of the Children Bill to provide for the waiving of the merits test or the means test in suitable cases. Consideration is now being given to legal aid in relation to civil proceedings as improved procedures are introduced following the civil justice review. We have established the need for certain immediate changes which are being announced today.

They are as follows:

(a) assessment of children's means separately from those of their parents;

(b) an additional capital allowance for pensioners on low incomes who rely heavily on their savings;

(c) an increase, in respect of personal injury cases, of the upper (eligibility) limits for disposable income and capital from £6,035 to £7,000 and from £6,000 to £8,000 respectively.

Their net annual cost is estimated to be in the region of £5 million. Other legal aid limits will also be increased in April in the usual way.

The Government intend to bring these measures into effect in Great Britain in April 1990. Similar improvements to the legal aid financial conditions will also be made in Northern Ireland, although the legislative arrangements there will mean that they will take longer to bring into effect.

Further changes will depend on the outcome of the review of the financial conditions for legal aid which the Lord Chancellor is setting up. The review will look at all aspects of the financial conditions, including the upper (eligibility) limit, the lower (free) limit, the amount of contribution payable and the statutory charge, as well as the machinery for assessing means and enforcing the payment of contributions.

The review will begin in January 1990 and is likely to complete its work in two or three years. It will explore the possibility of examining individual applicants' means in relation to the likely cost of different kinds of proceedings for the purpose of determining eligibility. It will consider the availability of legal expenses insurance and the position of those who proceed without legal aid.

In due course it will extend to criminal legal aid and to family proceedings, where eligibility is higher because individuals' means are generally separately assessed. It will keep in step wih the programme of work on family law, jurisdiction and procedure announced by the Lord Chancellor on 6 December 1988 during the passage of the Children Bill. The review will extend to legal advice and assistance—the green form scheme—in criminal and matrimonial matters. It will also consider the system of uprating the financial conditions generally.

The review will be conducted by a working group of officials from the Lord Chancellor's Department and the Legal Aid Board, with advice from the Department of Social Security and elsewhere as appropriate. The Scottish Office and the Scottish Legal Aid Board will participate

fully in the group on questions of equal application to Scotland. Consultation will be undertaken at appropriate stages.

The review will be undertaken in addition to the regular limited studies which the Government conduct each year for the purpose of uprating the legal aid limits.

House of Fraser

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Attorney-General (1) if any disciplinary action has been commenced against any fraud squad officer having access to copy No. 26 of the Department of Trade and Industry House of Fraser report; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if criminal inquiries are being pursued in respect of the leak of copy No. 26 of the Department of Trade and Industry House of Fraser report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I have been asked to reply.

Officers of the complaints investigation bureau of the Metropolitan police are carrying out an investigation into the leak of the Department of Trade and Industry report, under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority. The investigation will examine whether criminal or disciplinary proceedings should be brought against any police officer, and is expected to take some time to complete.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Carbon Tax

95. **Mr. Michael Morris:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which countries impose a carbon tax.

Mr. Lilley: I am not aware of any countries that impose a tax on emissions of carbon dioxide, or on fuels that produce carbon dioxide, with the intention of reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Capital Investment

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the percentage rate of growth of capital investment in the United Kingdom over the decade 1979 to 1989, and what is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average for the same period.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Gross domestic fixed capital formation in the United Kingdom is estimated to have grown by 34 per cent. at constant 1985 prices over the period 1979 to 1988, the last year for which full figures are available. For the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as a whole, the latest estimates show a growth of 29 per cent. over the same period at constant 1985 prices and exchange rates.

Car Disposal Tax

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if there are any plans to introduce a car disposal tax along Scandinavian lines.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has no plans to do so.

Bank of England

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will review the operation of the Bank of England Act 1946; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The Government have no plans to review the Bank of England Act 1946.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the benefits to the Bank of England of emulating the more independent stances, in relation to their central Governments, of the Bundesbank and the United States Federal Reserve Board.

Mr. Ryder: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister gave to the Leader of the Opposition on 2 November at column 464.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has prepared any estimate of the rate of the exchange against the D-mark at which it would be possible to join the ERM of the EMS to combine an acceptable rate of economic growth with balance of payments equilibrium.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's statement in the House on 2 November at column 490 which set out the factors that will determine when the United Kingdom will join the exchange rate mechanism.

Lending (Property)

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consultations he has undertaken with the Governor of the Bank of England regarding excessive lending to the property sector.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer holds regular meetings with the Governor of the Bank of England at which a variety of subjects are discussed.

Income Tax Allowance

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the additional revenue accruing to the Exchequer in the next fiscal year of not indexing to the rate of inflation the income tax allowance, assuming an inflation rate of 8 per cent. and no change in the income tax rate.

Mr. Major: Estimates of the revenue cost of indexation for 1990-91 will be published in the Autumn Statement later this month.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total per capita public expenditure in England in the past three years, excluding spending on social security.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Although information on public expenditure within the four countries of the United Kingdom is not available from the Treasury's public expenditure database or from the national accounts, a special exercise is carried out each year to collect this data. The results of the 1988 exercise were published in the House of Commons *Official Report* on 25 October 1988, at columns *120-29*.

In this annual exercise expenditure is divided into "identifiable" expenditure—that deemed to have been

incurred on behalf of the resident of each individual country—and "unidentifiable" expenditure—expenditure incurred on behalf of the United Kingdom as a whole, for example, defence spending. On the basis of the figures published on 25 October 1988 per capita identifiable public expenditure, excluding expenditure spending on social security, in England was as follows:

	£
1985-86	1,102
1986-87	1,166
1987-88	1,247

These figures relate to identifiable expenditure within the public expenditure planning total as defined for the 1988 and earlier public expenditure surveys. As announced in Cm. 441, the definition of the planning total has been changed for the 1989 public expenditure survey. As a consequence, the basis of this annual exercise will be changed to cover general Government expenditure. The results of this year's exercise will be published shortly.

Inflation

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average rate of inflation in each year since 1978-79.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* The table gives the inflation figures, as measured by the retail prices index, for each year requested.

Retail Price Index

	Annual per cent. change
1978-79	8·4
1979-80	15·8
1980-81	16·3
1981-82	11·5
1982-83	7·1
1983-84	4·7
1984-85	5·0
1985-86	5·9
1986-87	3·2
1987-88	3·9
1988-89	6·0

Manufacturing Investment

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is the percentage rate of growth of capital investment in manufacturing industry in the United Kingdom over the decade 1979 to 1989; and what is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average over the same period;

(2) what is the percentage rate of growth of capital investment in fixed assets in manufacturing industry in the United Kingdom over the decade 1979 to 1989; and what is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average over the same period.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* 1988 is the most recent full year for which investment data are available. In that year gross domestic fixed capital formation by United Kingdom manufacturing industry, including leased assets, equalled its 1979 level, at 1985 prices, following average growth of 8½ per cent. a year from 1983.

Figures for all OECD countries are not available on a comparable basis over this period. Such information as is available is published in "OECD National Accounts, volume 11, 1975-1987".

VAT

Mr. Burns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the estimated cost to industry and commerce by increasing value added tax to 18 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* The operation of the VAT system means that businesses making only taxable supplies would be able to deduct the VAT on their costs except in respect of purchases of motor cars and business entertainment. Businesses making exempt supplies would generally bear increased VAT on their purchases. Overall, the additional VAT that would be borne by businesses is estimated to be around £¾billion.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the estimated effect on the retail price index of increasing value added tax from 15 to 18 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* It is estimated that the effect on the retail prices index of increasing value added tax from 15 to 18 per cent. would be an increase in the index of around 1¼per cent.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the estimated effect, in money terms, on the annual family expenditure budget of *(a)* a single pensioner whose only income was the state pension, *(b)* a married pensioner couple whose only income was the state pension, *(c)* a single parent family earning £6,000 per annum, *(d)* a married couple with two children earning £10,000 per annum, *(e)* a married couple with two children earning £12,500 per annum and *(f)* a married couple earning £18,000 per annum with two children and *(g)* a married couple on unemployment benefit with two children; if value added tax were increased to 18 per cent.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* Assuming that their level and pattern of expenditure were unchanged, a married couple with two children with earned income of £12,500 a year would pay about £120 a year more in VAT, if the rate of VAT were raised to 18 per cent. The comparable figure for a similar family with earned income of £18,000 a year would be around £190 a year.

No estimates are available for the other family types specified in the question, since data on their expenditure patterns are less reliable.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Cambodia

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many representations he has received from *(a)* hon. and and right hon. Members and *(b)* others during the past three months concerning the policy of Her Majesty's Government relating to Cambodia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: We have received more than 600 representations from hon. and right hon. Members, and more than 4,000 from other sources in the last three months.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many letters and telephone inquiries his Department has received from the public on Cambodia since 31 October.

Mr. Maude: The Department has received over 3,500 letters and approximately 40 telephone inquiries on Cambodia since 31 October.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government will propose or sponsor the establishment of an international mission to verify that Vietnamese forces have fully withdrawn from Cambodia.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson) on 30 October.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will now make it his policy to support any challenge to the seating at the United Nations of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea when the situation in Cambodia is debated at the United Nations General Assembly on 15 and 16 November;

(2) what information he has as to whether Vietnamese forces have now left Cambodia.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) on 8 November.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what military training and support Her Majesty's Government have given to the forces of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea; what information he has as to co-ordinated attacks on Cambodia by the forces of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: I have nothing to add to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs to my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Lester) on 8 November.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if it is his policy to support pp4 of the ASEAN draft resolution on Cambodia, on foreign armed intervention and occupation in Kampuchea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: Yes. We have agreed to co-sponsor this resolution.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government intend to co-sponsor the resolution on Cambodia put forward by ASEAN countries for debate at the United Nations General Assembly on 15 November.

Mr. Maude: Yes, along with, at the last count, 75 others.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions the United Kingdom has voted to seat the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea at the United Nations; and how many such votes have taken place.

Mr. Maude: In 1979 the United Kingdom voted in favour of a General Assembly resolution adopting the report of the credentials committee recommending, inter alia, acceptance of the credentials of Democratic Kampuchea. From 1980-82 the United Kingdom voted against challenges to the credentials of Democratic Kampuchea in the General Assembly. There has been no vote since 1982.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has as to the number of Cambodian civilians who died in each year from 1976 to the present.

Mr. Maude: There are no reliable sources of information on which to base such estimates.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the former relations between the ambassador extraordinary and plenipoteniary to the United Nations of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Pol Pot.

Mr. Maude: The ambassador to the United Nations of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea is Thiounn Prasith. Between 1975 and 1979 he was employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Kampuchea.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what sources of information Her Majesty's Government use to assess the political, social and economic situation in Cambodia.

Mr. Maude: We draw on all sources available to us. These include the reporting of Her Majesty's embassies in Bangkok and elsewhere, the views of non-governmental organisations working inside Cambodia, consultation with our friends and partners and reports in the media.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when there was last a visit by representatives of Her Majesty's Government to Cambodia.

Mr. Maude: No representative of ours has visited Cambodia since the Vietnamese invasion in 1979.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which is the dominant faction in the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea.

Mr. Maude: The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) comprises three factions: Prince Norodom Sihanouk's group (FUNCINPEC), the Kampuchea People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF), and the Khmer Rouge. It is our policy to support the non-Communist resistance (FUNCINPEC and KPNLF) and we are determined that they should not fall under the domination of the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what positive evidence he has that Pol Pot is still actively involved in the direction of the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Maude: It is difficult to assess shifts of influence within the Khmer Rouge. We understand that Pol Pot resigned from his one remaining official position, that of Head of the Academy of National Defence, with effect from 3 June 1989. But he is still believed to wield influence behind the scenes.

Refuseniks

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about the case of Marat Goldberg of Leningrad;

(2) what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about the case of Mila Novik of Moscow and her two children.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have not previously raised these particular cases with the Soviet authorities but we will be happy to do so if my hon. Friend will provide the details.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about the case of Sasha and Irene Sterkin of Moscow and their two sons.

Mr. Waldegrave: We take every opportunity to press the Soviet authorities on individual refusenik cases such as that of Sasha and Irene Sterkin. My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs raised this case when he met Mr. Shevardnadze in New York on 29 September. We shall maintain our pressure until Sasha and Irene Sterkin are given permission to emigrate from the Soviet Union.

Mr John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about the case of Mark Barenshtein and his wife and two daughters of Moscow.

Mr. Waldegrave: We take every opportunity to press the Soviet authorities on individual refusenik cases such as that of Mark Barenshtein and his family. The last occasion that we raised this case was on 29 September when my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs met Mr. Shevardnadze in New York. We shall maintain our pressure until this case is resolved satisfactorily.

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: There are no plans to relocate the offices of either the diplomatic wing or the aid wing of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to the north-west of England. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Roxborough and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 6 November regarding the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's relocation programme.

Mr. Karnail Singh Khaira

Mr. Ground: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Indian Government concerning the arrest on 18 October in Jullundur, India, of Mr. Karnail Singh Khaira and his subsequent detention; and what response he has received from the Indian Government.

Mr Maude: The British high commission in New Delhi is pressing the Indian authorities for early consular access to Mr. Khaira, and awaits their response. Mr. Khaira's lawyer entered a writ of habeas corpus on 9 November 1989.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has concerning the training of another group of Indian peacekeeping forces to be based in north Sri Lanka.

Mr. Maude: None.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the number of the Indian peacekeeping forces based in Sri Lanka at the present time; and when they are due to be withdrawn.

Mr. Maude: In an agreement announced on 18 September, the Indian and Sri Lankan Governments noted that all efforts would be made to complete withdrawal of the Indian peacekeeping force by 31 December 1989. The process is under way. Our best estimate of the size of the Indian force, based on official announcements, is between 35,000 and 38,000.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Indian Government regarding the basing of Indian peacekeeping forces in Sri Lanka; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: None. We supported the Indo-Sri Lankan accord of 1987, and we welcome the agreement between the two countries announced on 18 September, which provided a framework for implementation of measures to achieve a peaceful settlement in the north and east and the phased withdrawal of the Indian peacekeeping force.

Gibraltar

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 8 November, if he will identify where the observations in relation to Gibraltar's lack of elected representation in the European Parliament made by the then Home Secretary may be found.

Mr. Maude: The observations are contained in the Supplement to the Votes and Proceedings No. 175 of 20 June 1984 at column 1455.

Children's Rights

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have yet signed and ratified the

United Nations convention on the rights of the child; and whether he will specify any reservations that have been entered by Her Majesty's Government on various articles of the convention.

Mr. Maude: The United Nations draft convention on the rights of the child is likely to be adoped by the United Nations later this month and we intend to ratify as soon as possible thereafter. We may need to enter reservations on various articles but the scope of these has yet to be determined. One area where we may need to enter a reservation would be in relation to our immigration and nationality laws.

British Embassies

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice and assistance was offered by his Department to British firms tendering for the construction of the new British embassy in Tokyo.

Mr. Maude: No new British embassy is proposed for Tokyo. The tender list for the construction of eight houses and a small apartment block in the British embassy compound has not yet been drawn up. My noble Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office has suggested to the Export Group for the Constructional Industries that British firms that are keen to establish a constructional foothold in Japan should forward tender pre-qualification details to the FCO for consideration. At least half the tender list will be reserved for United Kingdom contractors and the tender documents will state that particular attention would be paid to the tenders submitted by British or British/Japanese joint venture companies.

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his Department's policy towards assisting British firms tendering for contracts to build British embassies in protected foreign markets.

Mr. Maude: Our policy is to achieve the best value for money for the overseas diplomatic estate's capital construction programme. Tender lists are therefore open both to British and to local firms that express interest in a given project and can meet pre-qualification requirements.

German Reunification

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the issue of German reunification; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: It has been the belief of successive British Governments that real and permanent stability in Europe will not be achieved so long as the German nation is divided against its will. As a first step, the people of East Germany should have the right to hold free elections and to self-determination.

Afghanistan

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British citizens are known to be resident in Afghanistan at the latest available date; and what arrangements have been made for their interests to be looked after.

Mr. Maude: In February of this year, we were aware of five British nationals in Afghanistan.

As my hon. Friend, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said in his reply to the hon. Member's question on 13 March 1989, we informed British nationals before the temporary withdrawal of embassy staff in February 1989 that consular assistance would no longer be available in Afghanistan. British nationals who travel to or remain in the country do so in the knowledge that this is so.

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the total number of British diplomatic staff at present posted in Afghanistan; and when he expects the British Ambassador there to be appointed and take up post.

Mr. Maude: There are no British diplomats in Afghanistan. Her Majesty's ambassador was withdrawn in 1980 following the Soviet invasion. There are no current plans to appoint a new ambassador.

Diplomatic Representation

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those countries where Britain has no diplomatic representation, giving in each case the reason why no such representation is considered necessary.

Mr. Maude: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 5 May to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn). Since then agreement has been reached with Argentina to re-establish consular relations.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Durham Prison

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will be acting on the recommendations made by Her Majesty's inspector of prisons with regard to Durham prison.

Mr. Mellor: A statement by my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd) setting out the action which was being taken, was published on 19 October 1989 as his response to the report of Her Majesty's chief inspector of prisons on Durham prison and a copy was placed in the Library.

Suicides

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suicides there have been in *(a)* all United Kingdom prisons and *(b)* Swansea prison in each of the last 10 years; how many were prisoners on remand; and how many were prisoners under the age of 21 years.

Mr. Mellor: The table gives the figures for inmates held in prison establishments in England and Wales in each year since 1980.

Year	Total suicides[1]	Suicides by remand inmates[1]	Suicides by inmates under the age of 21[1]
1980	21	12	2
1981	16	7	1
1982	17	8	4
1983	21	9	2
1984	23	12	2
1985	23	14	1
1986	17	12	3
1987	42	27	7
1988	30	19	7
1989	[2]21	[2]9	[2]2

[1]The table gives the number of deaths for which suicide verdicts were returned at the inquest.

[2]Inquests have yet to be held on 14 other inmates who have died in 1989 and whose deaths are thought to have been suicides. Of these 11 were on remand and six were under the age of 21.

Suicide verdicts have been returned on two inmates who died at Swansea prison during the same period, one in 1984 and one in 1988. Both were remand inmates. The inmate who died in 1984 was under the age of 21. An inquest has yet to be held on an 18 year-old remand inmate who died at Swansea prison on 4 November 1989.

Deaths of inmates in custody in Scotland and Northern Ireland are matters for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases originating in Scotland are pending before the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board; and how many such cases have been dealt with by the board in every year since its inception.

Mr. John Patten: The board had 95,395 cases outstanding on 31 October 1989. No breakdown of this total is kept between English, Scottish and Welsh cases, but over recent years the proportion of Scottish applications has been around 16 per cent. of the total.

The number of Scottish cases resolved since the board was set up is given in the table:

Period	Number of cases resolved
1 August 1964 to 31 March 1966	190
Year ended 31 March	
1967	536
1968	869
1969	1,522
1970	1,493
1971	1,153
1972	1,828
1973	1,862
1974	2,129
1975	2,304
1976	2,482
1977	2,705
1978	2,898
1979	2,999
1980	3,355
1981	3,864
1982	3,441
1983	4,303
1984	4,753
1985	4,024
1986	3,783
1987	4,407
1988	4,391
1989	5,482
TOTAL	66,773

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the names and qualifications of the present members of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, and the total length of time they have served as members of the board.

Mr. John Patten: Under the terms of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme members must be legally qualified. Present members, who are listed in the table, with their dates of appointment, are either Queen's Counsel with experience in civil litigation or past presidents of the Law Society.

Name	Date of appointment to the Board
Mr. James Law QC[1]	29 September 1970
Mr. Charles Whitby QC	20 October 1975
Mr. Barry Chedlow QC	13 January 1976
Mr. David Calcutt QC	5 September 1977
Miss Beryl Cooper QC	12 September 1978
Miss Shirley Ritchie QC	23 June 1980
Sir John Palmer JP	6 March 1981
Mr. Stuart Shields QC	13 March 1981
Sir Denis Marshall	15 September 1982
Mr. Hugh Carlisle QC	22 December 1982
Mr. Colin Fawcett QC	12 April 1983
Mr. Michael Park CBE[1]	8 July 1983
Mr. Martin Thomas OBE QC	9 April 1985
Mr. John Crowley QC	3 July 1985
Sir Arthur Hoole	30 July 1985
Mr. Michael Bruce QC[1]	1 January 1986
Mr. Donald Robertson QC[1]	1 April 1986
Mr. Michael Lewer QC	30 September 1986
Mr. Peter Weitzman QC	8 November 1986
Mr. Conrad Seagroatt QC	15 November 1986
Mr. John Archer QC	2 January 1987
Mr. Owen Thomas QC	18 March 1987
Mr. Leighton Williams QC	26 March 1987
Mr. Graeme Hamilton QC	15 April 1987
Mr. William Gage QC	22 December 1987
Mr. Barry Green QC	24 December 1987
Mrs. Janet Smith QC	29 December 1987
Mr. Thomas Dawson QC[1]	31 January 1988
Sir Derek Bradbeer OBE	18 April 1988
Mr. Crawford Lindsay QC	19 April 1988
Lord Carlisle of Bucklow PC QC[2]	1 December 1988
Mrs. Barbara Mills QC	30 October 1988
Mr. Robert Smith QC	7 November 1988
Lord Macaulay of Bragar QC[1]	12 January 1989
Miss Diana Cotton QC	26 January 1989
Mr. Donald Mackay QC[1]	6 February 1989
Mr. Evan Stone QC	13 July 1989
Mr. Daniel Brennan QC	21 September 1989
Mr. Timothy Preston QC	25 September 1989
Mr. John Cherry QC	21 October 1989

[1] Scottish Member.
[2] Chairman from 1 March 1989.

Drugs

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many registered drug addicts are currently on remand or under sentence in prison establishments in England and Wales.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Tooting (Mr. Tom Cox) on 10 November at columns *803-04*.

Prison Population

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the ethnic composition of the remand and sentenced prison population for the latest date available at *(a)* Brixton, *(b)* Wormwood Scrubs, *(c)* Wandsworth, *(d)* Pentonville, *(e)* Holloway, *(f)* Manchester *(g)* Birmingham and *(h)* Leeds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* The latest available information is given in the table.

Population[1] of specified Prision Service establishments in England and Wales on 30 June 1989: by establishment, type of prisoner and ethnic origin

Number

Establishment and type of prisoner	*White*	*Ethnic origin: West Indian, Guyanese, African*	*Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi*	*Chinese, Arab, Mixed origin*	*Other, not recorded (including refusals)*	*Total number of persons in establishments*
Brixton						
Untried	440	226	22	19	30	737
Convicted unsentenced	105	36	3	3	1	148
Sentenced	123	33	6	3	5	170
Non-criminal	—	2	—	—	—	2
All prisoners	668	297	31	25	36	1,057
Wormwood Scrubs[2]						
Untried	388	228	17	15	7	655
Convicted unsentenced	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sentenced	320	46	9	7	9	391
Non-criminal	—	—	—	—	—	—
All prisoners	708	274	26	22	16	1,046
Wandsworth						
Untried	—	—	—	—	—	—
Convicted unsentenced	29	26	3	1	3	62
Sentenced	1,029	338	54	33	34	1,488
Non-criminal	—	—	—	—	—	—
All prisoners	1,058	364	57	34	37	1,550
Pentonville						
Untried	101	51	2	7	7	168
Convicted unsentenced	28	10	2	1	1	42
Sentenced	480	151	21	17	4	673
Non-criminal	11	5	—	10	1	27
All prisoners	620	217	25	35	13	910
Holloway						
Untried	116	62	2	8	34	222
Convicted unsentenced	32	8	1	2	11	54
Sentenced	109	61	1	5	19	195
Non-criminal	—	1	—	—	—	1
All prisoners	257	132	4	15	64	472
Manchester[3]						
Untried	423	36	15	27	18	519
Convicted unsentenced	168	5	1	6	8	188
Sentenced	803	32	16	19	9	879
Non-criminal	—	—	—	—	—	—
All prisoners	1,394	73	32	52	35	1,586
Birmingham						
Untried	260	74	22	7	12	375
Convicted unsentenced	54	8	7	2	3	74
Sentenced	376	71	26	15	8	496
Non-criminal	1	—	3	1	—	5
All prisoners	691	153	58	25	23	950
Leeds						
Untried	490	33	29	13	11	576
Convicted unsentenced	73	5	2	2	2	84
Sentenced	565	22	18	11	6	622
Non-criminal	5	3	—	1	—	9
All prisoners	1,133	63	49	27	19	1,291

[1] Provisional. The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate.
[2] Local and closed training prison.
[3] Remand centre and local prison.

Prisoners (Ethnic Minorities)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of male and female remand and sentenced prisoners in England and Wales are known to be derived from an ethnic minority for the latest date available; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* The readily available information is given in the table. The information is published annually in "Prison statistics, England and Wales", table 1.11 of the 1988 issue, Cm. 825, copies of which are available in the Library.

Population[1] of prison service establishments in England and Wales on 30 June 1989: by type of prisoner, sex and ethnic origin

Number

Type of prisoner and sex	*White*	*Ethnic origin: West Indian, Guyanese, African*	*Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi*	*Chinese, Arab, Mixed origin*	*Other, not recorded (including refusals)*	*Total of persons in establishments*
Males						
Untried	6,053	1,077	209	175	429	7,943
Convicted unsentenced	1,516	177	32	34	86	1,845
Sentenced	30,748	3,637	1,055	676	618	36,734
Non-criminal	79	41	27	38	69	254
All prisoners	38,396	4,932	1,323	923	1,202	46,776
Females						
Untried	245	67	3	13	50	378
Convicted unsentenced	71	9	1	3	14	98
Sentenced	892	267	22	34	64	1,279
Non-criminal	—	1	—	—	—	1
All prisoners	1,208	344	26	50	128	1,756

[1] Provisional. The figures are those recorded centrally and are approximate.

Prisoners (Postage Stamps)

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers prison governors have to forbid the loan of a postage stamp by one prisoner to another.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* Powers exist under Standing Order 4 and prison rule 47. One of their purposes is to prevent items, such as postage stamps, from being used as a form of currency within prisons.

PRIME MINISTER

East Timor

Dr. Thomas (Meirionydd Nant Conwy): To ask the Prime Minister whether she will list the United Kingdom's voting record on the question of the Indonesian occupation of East Timor during the general assemblies of the United Nations held since 1979).

The Prime Minister: The United Kingdom abstained on all United Nation General Assembly resolutions on East Timor between 1979 and 1982—resolutions 34/49 (1979); 35/27 (1980); 36/50 (1981) and 37/30 (1982). There have been no United Nations resolutions since.

Cambodia

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Prime Minister how many letters and telephone inquiries her office has received from the public on Cambodia since 31 October.

The Prime Minister: I have received approximately 1,500 letters on Cambodian-related matters.

Mr John Broome

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what contact she has had with Mr. John Broome CBE since she launched The Battersea in June 1988; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: My normal practice is and will continue to be neither to confirm nor deny whether meetings with private individuals have taken place, even in those cases where no such meeting has occurred.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Tapajos Forest, Brazil

Mr. Hardy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will reconsider his decision to approve a study of the Tapajos area of tropical forest in Brazil in the light of the fact that it has already been the subject of study.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on 9 November at column *719*.

Aid

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current cost of British overseas aid; and how much of the total is allocated to the dependent territories and how much to each of the dependent territories.

Mrs. Chalker: In the current financial year the aid programme stands at £1,500 million. Last financial year we spent £44,095,000 on aid for the dependent territories broken down as follows:

	£000s
Anguilla	1,778
British Virgin Islands	2,033
Montserrat	2,158
Turks and Caicos Islands	5,046
Falkland Islands	3,622
Gibralter[1]	8,733
St. Helena[2]	20,725
TOTAL	44,095

[1] Includes assistance towards a pensions settlement.
[2] Includes payments for a new ship—the island's only physical link with the rest of the world.

This financial year we expect to spend a broadly similar total.

Montserrat

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what special financial assistance has been given to Montserrat in consequece of the recent widespread hurricane damage in the dependency; if he will provide a breakdown of the extra expenditure incurred, indicating the purposes for which it was allocated in each case; and how much of the total expenditure has been or will be the responsibility of Ministers in the dependency.

Sir Peter Emery: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance has been given to the island of Montserrat to overcome the damage caused by hurricane Hugo on 17 September.

Mrs. Chalker: Immediately following hurricane Hugo Britain made an initial £1 million available for emergency assistance, such as tents, blankets, roofing, medicaments and so on, and also the services of the British armed forces for immediate repairs and the airfreighting of supplies. Most of this assistance was directed to Montserrat. Subsequently, a further £3·2 million for reconstruction aid has been committed. This is being used to finance teams of engineers, linesmen and electricians—some 50 people—from British electricity boards who are repairing the power distribution system and for the supply of equipment and materials for the restoring of essential infrastructure. The funds will be used primarily in Montserrat, which suffered by far the worse damage, but also in Antigua.

Officials from the British development division in Barbados and from the United Kingdom have recently completed a review of Montserrat's longer-term reconstruction needs and strategy. We will be discussing these with the Government of Montserrat, and with the multilateral agencies and other donors.

The reconstruction work is the responsibility of the Montserrat Government and the public service companies concerned. The British Government will be contributing, and the ODA will monitor the use of aid funds in the usual way.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Recycled Paper

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Lord President of the Council what quantity of paper, excluding newspapers, in metric tonnes, has been used in the House of Commons within the last 12 months on *(a)* Members' stationery, *(b)* the Vote Bundle, *(c)* the *Official Report* and *(d)* production of Bills and other legislative documents; if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Leicester East (Mr. Vaz), *Official Report*, 4 April, column *68*, he is now in a position to indicate what percentage of the paper is recycled, specifying percentages for each of the four sections; what percentage of each section identified is subsequently recycled; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The information requested is *(a)* 26 tonnes; *(b)* 168 tonnes; *(c)* 158 tonnes and *(d)* 43 tonnes. Recycled paper is not used for these categories because much of the material is of archival significance, and recycled paper of suitable archival quality is not currently obtainable. Buff envelopes, ruled writing paper, file covers, note books, index books, lavatory paper and waste paper sacks all contain at least 50 per cent. recycled material. All non-confidential waste paper from the House of Commons is collected by a contractor for recycling.

Questions

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Lord President of the Council what was the total number of *(a)* oral and written parliamentary questions put down (i) in the last Session, (ii) five and (iii) 10 years previously; and if he will provide similar figures excluding oral questions to the Prime Minister.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The information[1] available for Sessions 1977-78, 1982-83 and 1987-88 is as follows:

Questions tabled	*(a) Oral*	*(b) Written*
1977-78	9,036	28,739
1982-83[2]	6,125	17,095
1987-88[2]	24,940	47,726

[1] Statistics for oral questions excluding those tabled for reply by the Prime Minister are not readily available in the form requested.
[2] 1982-83 was a "short" Session and 1987-88 was "long" Session.

Kenyan Tea and Coffee

Mr. Cox: To ask the Lord President of the Council if Kenyan tea or coffee is served in restaurants and cafeterias in the House; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Tea and coffee purchased by the Refreshment Department are blended products originating from more than one country.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Ordination of Women

87. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, as representing the Church Commissioners, what finance and facilities the Church Commissioners are making available *(a)* to supporters of the ordination of women and *(b)* opponents of the same; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alison: None. This is a matter for the General Synod.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

Duchy Business

82. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much time he spends each week on duchy business.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I spend approximately a quarter of my time carrying out my duties as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Wyre

85. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he has any plans to pay an official visit to the Wyre constituency in the county palatine.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I have no plans to visit the Wyre constituency at present.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Playing Spaces

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* to show *(a)* the total amount of outdoor playing space in Northern Ireland, *(b)* the amount of playing space by district council area, *(c)* the amount of playing space per head of the population in each council area, *(d)* the amount of such playing space in each council which is owned by (i) councils, (ii) schools, (iii) recognised sporting clubs and bodies and (iv) others, or as much of such information as is available to him.

Dr. Mawhinney: Play space at schools and higher education establishments is shown in the table. The other information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Council	*Controlled schools*	*Voluntary and maintained schools*	*Universities*	*Colleges of education*
	area/hectares	*area/hectares*	*acres*	*acres*
Antrim	36·73	9·86	—	—
Armagh	18·07	22·57	—	—
Ballymena	29·36	25·13	—	—
Ballymoney	10·40	8·04	—	—
Banbridge	17·85	5·74	—	—
Belfast	85·10	75·54	74	12·0
Carrickfergus	30·81	2·51	—	—
Castlereagh	28·89	6·70	—	—
Coleraine	28·44	14·47	60	—
Cookstown	12·77	13·00	—	—
Craigavon	54·19	24·94	—	—
Down	19·25	34·42	—	—
Dungannon	23·10	38·38	—	—
Fermanagh	15·81	24·76	—	—
Larne	10·70	7·22	—	—
Limavady	23·42	7·97	—	—
Lisburn	39·86	20·96	—	—
Londonderry	34·55	41·19	7	—
Magherafelt	10·32	20·74	—	—
Moyle	7·65	5·62	—	—
Newry and Mourne	19·90	43·35	—	—
Newtownabbey	32·28	18·58	40	—
Newtownards	32·12	3·61	—	—
North Down	16·91	15·76	—	—
Omagh	18·06	21·40	—	—
Strabane	20·07	18·15	—	—

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what are the statutory minimum standards for outdoor playing space in Northern Ireland;

(2) what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the current level of provision of outdoor playing space in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: There are no general statutory minimum standards for outdoor playing space in Northern Ireland except for schools whose standards are laid down in the School Premises (Standards) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1973 (SR and O No. 491 (1973)). I have made no overall assessment of the levels of provision for outdoor playing space in Northern Ireland, but I am satisfied with the minimum standards laid down for schools in these regulations.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the number of young unemployed in the Province at the latest available date.

Mr. Needham: At 14 September 1989, the latest date for which figures are available, 31,593 unemployed claimants in Northern Ireland were under 25 years old, and 4,739 of these were aged 18 or under.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the unemployment figure among construction workers in the Province at the latest date.

Mr. Needham: At 14 September 1989, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 17,549 unemployed construction workers in Northern Ireland.

ENVIRONMENT

Science and Policy Issues

Dr. Hampson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what advice he has received from the Nature Conservancy Council regarding existing science and policy issues at a national level; and whether he will place a copy of that advice in the Library.

Mr. Trippier: My right hon. Friend has received a variety of representations and advice about the Government's proposals to reorganise the conservation agencies, which were announced in July. Among these was a paper from the Nature Conservancy Council entitled "Proposed Reorganisation of NCC: Policy and Science Issues". With the agreement of the chairman of the council, copies of this paper will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses shortly.

Containers

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he intends to take to encourage the use of biodegradable plastic containers.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Government are considering with industry and local authorities how to promote the most environmentally responsible means of dealing with plastics waste, including biodegradability, recycling and reuse. The long-term effects of biodegradable plastics on the environment is to be the subject of research which the Government will be monitoring closely.

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Patten: Over 1,500 posts in my Department (including the Property Services Agency) are already located in the north-west. Eleven posts in the Department's rent charges unit will shortly be transferred to Manchester. Information about the Department's review of the scope for further relocation was given in reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) on 26 July at column *785*.

Forests

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how he intends to ensure that Her Majesty's Government's contribution to the target figure of replanting the world's forests with 12 million hectares of trees each year from the turn of the century, agreed at Noordwijk, will be achieved.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The Noordwijk declaration makes no apportionment of the suggested 12 million hectares target as between individual countries. However, the United Kingdom already has a creditable record on forestry. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced in her speech to the United Nations, we intend to increase spending largely on the tropical forest action plan by £100 million over the next three years. This is in addition to the 125 forestry schemes worldwide already being supported directly or jointly with a number of non-governmental organisations. In the United Kingdom the farm woodland scheme has a target of 36,000 hectares of domestic tree planting over a three-year period and the Department of Transport is planting 1 million trees a year in conjunction with its roads programme.

Endangered Species

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on British participation at the CITES conference at Lausanne in relation to the American proposals on reviews of research proposals in relation to ivory, fur and reptile skins.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: None. I understand, however, that the Japanese Government have indicated that they fully support the decision of the CITES conference to transfer the African elephant from appendix II to appendix I of the convention, and have no intention of entering a reservation.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what contacts he has had with Japan over the honouring of the CITES Lausanne agreement.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The proposals were not discussed in any of the formal conference sessions. We will study the results of any such work with interest in consultation with our scientific advisers.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for each planning authority the proportion of planning appeals upheld, categorised according to the reasons for appeal, in each of the last five years.

Mr. Moynihan: This information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Government Car Service

Mr. Dicks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those people who are neither hon. Members of Parliament, former Prime Ministers, nor civil servants who are entitled to use the Government car service, and the reason for their entitlement.

Mr. Chope: In addition to Members of Parliament and civil servants, entitlement to use the Government car service is extended, by reason of their official duties, to the chairmen or chief executives of certain national boards, judges, officials of the Houses of Parliament, No. 10 Downing street, and occasionally to visiting foreign Government officials and trade delegations.

Education and Youth Service (Funding)

Ms. Hilary Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the 1990-91 standard assessment for *(a)* education, *(b)* under-fives education, *(c)* primary education, *(d)* secondary education, *(e)* post-16 education, and *(f)* other education, for each local education authority in England.

Mr. Chope: I have today placed in the Library a table showing provisional 1990-91 standard spending assessments for under-fives education, primary education,

secondary education, post-16 education, other education and all education services for each local education authority in England.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what elements of the standard spending assessment for each local education authority is attributable to the youth service expenditure; and if he will list that element for each local education authority in England.

Mr. Chope: Allowance for the expenditure on youth related services is made within the other education sub-block of the education standard spending assessment. This sub-block also covers adult education. The proposed control total for this block in 1990-91 is £756 million.

Local Government Finance

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will specify the guidance he has issued on the Government's policy, for the period after the abolition of domestic rates, towards rating of domestic property, when that property is used for a non-domestic purpose which does not materially detract from the domestic use.

Mr. Chope: The Inland Revenue valuation office will determine whether minor non-domestic use of domestic property should be assessed for rating purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Guidance, in the form of a practice note, will be issued to all local authorities as soon as possible on the boundary between domestic and non-domestic property and will include details of the approach to be adopted by valuation officers in such cases.

Urban Aid

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total budget for urban programmes for the year 1989-90; and what amounts of urban programme aid have been allocated to each of the 57 qualifying authorities for the year to date.

Mr. Moynihan: The total provision for the urban programme in 1989-90 is £260 million. A total of £246 million was allocated to local authorities—and district health authorities within those areas. The remainder was topsliced for the Merseyside special allocation, residual traditional urban programme commitments, low attaining pupils programme and research. The local authority allocations are as follows:

1989-90 Total allocation

	£ million
Northern	
Newcastle/Gateshead	17·061
Hartlepool	1·750
Langbaurgh	1·750
Middlesbrough	5·349
North Tyneside	3·400
South Tyneside	4·700
Stockton	1·368
Sunderland	5·019
North West	
Manchester/Salford	21·773
Blackburn	4·000
Bolton	3·625
Burnley	1·891
Oldham	3·583
Preston	2·120
Rochdale	3·545
Wigan	2·366
East Midlands	
Derby	1·480
Leicester	4·750
Nottingham	5·120
Yorkshire/Humberside	
Barnsley	1·598
Bradford	4·500
Doncaster	1·793
Hull	4·636
Kirklees	0·914
Leeds	4·315
Rotherham	1·794
Sheffield	5·059
Merseyside	
Liverpool	19·353
Halton	1·325
Knowsley	3·768
St. Helens	1·662
Sefton	1·429
Wirral	3·253
West Midlands	
Birmingham	23·000
Coventry	4·575
Dudley	1·340
Sandwell	4·407
Walsall	1·595
Wolverhampton	4·867
The Wrekin	0·680
South West	
Bristol	1·373
Plymouth	1·003
London	
Hackney	7·734
Islington	8·567
Lambeth	9·965
Brent	3·336
Greenwich	1·067
Hammersmith/Fulham	3·330
Haringey	2·650
Kensington/Chelsea	1·775
Lewisham	1·700
Newham	2·589
Southwark	2·494
Tower Hamlets	4·373
Wandsworth	3·256
TOTAL	245·725

Homelessness

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which organisations are to be granted funding under section 73 of the Housing Act 1985 during the next financial year; and what is the amount they will receive.

Mr. Chope: No decisions have yet been taken on which voluntary organisations are to be funded under section 73 of the Housing Act 1985 during the next financial year. An announcement will be made shortly.

Floor Tiles (House of Commons)

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the damaged floor tiles in the House will be replaced.

Mr. Chope: Temporary repairs to the damaged tiles were carried out earlier this year. Discussions are continuing with English Heritage to develop a programme for either the permanent repair or replacement of the damaged tiles in the Central Lobby, Lower Waiting Hall and St. Stephen's Hall. The parliamentary works office hopes to be able to put agreed proposals to the House in the new year.

Battersea Power Station

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any proposals to demolish Battersea power station; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: No. Listed building consent was given by Wandsworth borough council in June 1986 for a scheme that envisaged minor amounts of demolition. Consent for other works has been given by the council subsequently.

Council House Sales

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the effect of the introduction in March of the tenants' sanction procedures for right-to-buy applicants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The tenants' sanction procedures were introduced by section 124 of the Housing Act 1988 and came into effect on 10 March 1989. The provisions provide for tenants who are exercising the right to buy their homes, but are being held up by delays on the part of the landlord, to require the rent they pay while the delay continues to be treated as an advance payment towards the purchase price, and to shorten by a corresponding period the time within which they are liable to repay discount if they resell their home. These measures therefore provide financial redress for tenants who suffer from delay, and penalise the local authorities who cause this delay.

I am glad to be able to announce that there are signs of improved right-to-buy performance in London since the introduction of the tenants' sanction. But the Department continues to receive a large number of complaints about right-to-buy delays and it is clear that the most significant delays still occur in London where the Department currently monitor 12 boroughs of which four—Brent, Hackney, Lambeth and Southwark—have more than 1,000 cases delayed beyond the statutory time limits.

I have decided that it is now appropriate to review the performance of all London housing authorities in the light of the introduction of the delay procedures.

So as to determine the effect of the tenants' sanction provisions and the extent of right-to-buy delays in London, the Department has written to all London boroughs asking them to provide details of their right-to-buy caseload and the number of tenant's sanction notices which have been served on them. A copy of the letter to chief executives has been placed in the Library.

I will consider what further monitoring or other measures are necessary when I have the results of this exercise.

Water Authorities (Interest Payments)

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what income was received by the national loans fund in respect of interest payments by water authorities in the last financial year.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* This information will be presented to the House shortly when, in accordance with paragraph 35 of schedule 3 to the Water Act 1973, the national loans fund White Paper accounts for 1988-89 are published.

Waste Paper

Mr. Corbett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further steps he proposes to take to encourage and assist local authorities to provide or expand schemes for the recycling of waste paper.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* In conjunction with the Department of Trade and Industry, my Department will shortly carry out a survey of local authorities to identify best practice in the recycling of waste paper and other waste streams. In addition, we will be closely monitoring the results of the recycling city project in Sheffield which, among other things, involves the kerbside collection of waste paper. I shall be opening the next phase of this project on 21 November.

Paper and Board

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures he is taking to assist environmental initiatives by the British paper and board industry.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* My Department and the Department of Trade and Industry are in regular contact with individual paper and board manufacturers and relevant trade associations with a view to encouraging the use of recycled paper and board. The Government, with leading paper and board manufacturers, held a series of seminars earlier this year throughout the United Kingdom on recycling waste paper for use as newsprint, to which there has been a very positive response.

Eutrophication

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to commission a study of the eutrophication of ponds, lakes and waterways in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* I do not consider that such a study is required at present because eutrophication is not generally a problem in United Kingdom waters. The National Rivers Authority is responsible in England and Wales for the control of water pollution and the maintenance and improvement of the quality of controlled waters.

Water Meter

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give a breakdown of the estimated price per gallon of water to be charged after household water meter installation.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* No. The charge per gallon will depend on the structure of the measured tariff fixed by each water undertaker under the conditions of its instrument of appointment.

Recycling

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the local authorities which have implemented one or more recycling initiatives within the past 12 months involving *(a)* paper, *(b)* aluminium or *(c)* glass.

Mr. Trippier: We do not at present hold such information centrally. However, I recently launched the National Directory of Recycling Information which lists recycling initiatives, available from Waste Watch, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HU.

Tropical Forests

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what contribution British research is making to the European Community's effort to select the most practical and internationally acceptable options to conserve the tropical hardwood forests.

Mr. Trippier: The United Kingdom has an extensive bilateral programme of assistance on tropical forests which, as the Prime Minister announced on 8 November, has recently been enhanced by a further £100 million. Our principal contribution to EC efforts has been to second a forestry expert to the Commission's development directorate. We of course take a full part in discussions on forestry within the Community, and at the meeting of European Environment Ministers in June 1989 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State supported the redeployment of resources within the Commission towards forestry.

Urban Aid

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total budget for city grant for the year 1989-90; and if he will publish a table showing what schemes have been approved in the year to date, giving the authority receiving the grant, for what scheme and what proportion of the total cost of the scheme was represented by the grant.

Mr. David Hunt: I will write to the hon. Member.

DEFENCE

War Widows

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will seek powers to give the same remuneration to war widows from world war one and world war two as is paid to Falklands campaign widows.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: War widows receive those pensions to which they are eligible under the provisions of appropriate schemes. All war widows receive a war widow's pension under the war pensions scheme administered by the Department of Social Security. Pensions may also be payable under the terms of the occupational scheme for the armed forces. The widows of men who died during, or as a result of, the Falklands campaign are eligible for an attributable forces family pension under that scheme as the result of improvements which were introduced from 31 March 1973 and applied only to those personnel who gave service on or after that date. There are no plans to extend eligibility to those whose service ended before that date.

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what benefits payable to war widows under the contributory pension scheme are covered by contributions; and to what extent they are financed by other forms of revenue.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The armed forces pension scheme is non-contributory. The cost of forces family pensions, paid to those war widows who are eligible, is met from the funds allocated to the appropriate defence vote. However, subsequent to the appointment of the Review Body on Armed Forces Pay in September 1971, it has been the practice of that body to make an adjustment, within the process of determining recommended rates of pay for the armed forces, which takes into account differences in superannuation benefits between those of the armed forces scheme and those of comparators' schemes.

Low Flying

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many Harrier GR7 aircraft are being brought into service in the next five years; how many aircrews will be trained to fly at low level at night; and how many night-hours each aircrew will be required to fly each year to maintain the required RAF levels of proficiency;

(2) how many hours at low flying at night have been undertaken in each of the past five years; and what level of increase is anticipated after the Harrier GR7 aircraft is brought into service;

(3) how many hours of low flying at night were planned to occur in West Germany prior to the West German decision to ban low flying training at night;

(4) if he will list in the *Official Report* the areas of the United Kingdom that will be used to train air crews engaged in low level night-time flying exercises in Harrier GR7 aircraft;

(5) whether the specifications of the Harrier GR7 aircraft requires low level night time training exercises to be undertaken in the area of the Spadeadam Royal Air Force base.

Mr. Neubert: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to the hon. Member.

Air-Misses

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the outcome of the investigation by the joint air-miss working group into the incident involving a military aircraft and a civil passenger flight over Tranent on the evening of 2 August.

Mr. Neubert: The official report of the investigation into this incident is not yet available.

Chemical Weapons Training

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will order an investigation into the circumstances in which polyethylene glycol was released

from a Royal Air Force aircraft over the town of Amesbury on an occasion in October; and if he will make it his policy to publish the results;

(2) what is the damage to private property caused by the release of polyethylene glycol by a Royal Air Force aircraft over the town of Amesbury;

(3) what was the purpose of spraying troops with polyethylene glycol on the occasion in October when a quantity of this chemical was released over the town of Amesbury;

(4) what were the chemical constituents of the liquid released by a Royal Air Force aircraft over the town of Amesbury on an occasion in October.

Mr. Neubert: I refer the hon. and learned Member to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) on 10 November 1989 at columns *798-99*.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what are the chemical formulae of the substances that are used during chemical weapons training.

Mr. Neubert: The MOD does not undertake chemical weapons training. The only materials released from the air as stimulants for chemical and biological defence training are water and polythylene glycol 300.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what health and safety measures are taken to ensure the health of those service personnel involved in chemical weapons training;

(2) what steps are taken to monitor the health of those service personnel involved in chemical weapons training.

Mr. Neubert: All equipment and simulants used for training purposes go through a thorough scrutiny and approval procedure before being cleared for service use, and there is, therefore, no specific reason to monitor service men's health following chemical and biological defence training. However, the health of service personnel is routinely monitored.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the chemical formula of the substance that was discharged by an aircraft operating from the aircraft and armaments establishment at Boscombe Down on 25 October.

Mr. Neubert: The chemical training agent discharged from an aircraft operated by A and AEE Boscombe Down on 25 October was polyethylene glycol 300. Its chemical formula is $CH_2(OH).(CH_2O\ CH_2)m.CH_2OH$, where m may be a 5 or 6.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there have been any *(a)* injuries or fatalities recorded on and *(b)* injuries, illnesses or fatalities that have resulted from chemical weapons training.

Mr. Neubert: There are no recorded illnesses, injuries or fatalities resulting directly from the use of simulants in chemical and biological defence training.

WALES

Toxic Material (Imports)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many letters he received during the past three months concerning the importation into Wales of polychlorinated biphenyl contaminated material; and what inquiries he has undertaken concerning this matter.

Mr. Grist: We have received 23 letters.

Details of imports of PCB wastes are notified to my right hon. Friend under the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988.

Hospital Provision (Porthmadog)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what further discussion he now proposes having with Gwynedd health authority concerning the future of hospital provision in the Porthmadog area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: My right hon. Friend's decision on Gwynedd health authority's proposals for the future of hospital provision in the Porthmadog area was conveyed to the authority in letters of 3 and 22 March 1989 which were copied to the hon. Gentleman. Subject to the outcome of the High Court's consideration of that decision, implementation of their proposals is a matter for Gwynedd health authority.

Standard Spending Assessments

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the 1990-91 standard spending assessments for *(a)* education, *(b)* under-fives education, *(c)* primary education, *(d)* secondary education, *(e)* post-16 education, and *(f)* other education, for each local education authority in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Welsh revenue support grant formulae do not form a basis for calculating a notional allocation of standard spending assessment for any particular service. The 1990-91 totals of standard spending assessment are not yet available.

School Class Sizes

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest figures for average class sizes in *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary and *(c)* nursery schools for each local education authority in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Details of average class sizes are given in the following table. The information given for primary schools relates to the average size of registered classes. In the case of secondary schools the information given is based on the size of classes actually taught. Information is not collected centrally on class sizes in nursery schools.

	Primary Schools (Average size of registered classes)	*Secondary Schools (Average size of one teacher classes as taught)*
Clwyd	25·8	20·1
Dyfed	21·8	18·6
Gwent	26·4	18·6

	Primary Schools (Average size of registered classes)	Secondary Schools (Average size of one teacher classes as taught)
Gwynedd	21·6	17·7
Mid Glamorgan	26·2	19·6
Powys	20·3	16·3
South Glamorgan	26·7	20·4
West Glamorgan	24·8	19·3

Nursery Schools

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest figures for the percentage of under-fives in nursery schools, by local education authority in Wales in rank order.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information as at January 1989 is shown in the following table:

Percentage of under fives in Nursery Schools[1][2]

	Per cent.
Gwent	9·6
Mid Glamorgan	8·4
South Glamorgan	7·3
Clwyd	3·2
Dyfed	2·5
West Glamorgan	2·5

[1] Aged as at August 1988, excluding rising fives, expressed as a percentage of the number of three and four-year-old population.
[2] There are no nursery schools in Gwynedd or Powys.

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest figures for the percentage of under-fives in nursery classes, by local education authorities in Wales, in rank order.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information as at January 1989 is shown in the following table:

Percentage of under fives in nursery classes[1]

	Per cent.
West Glamorgan	52·3
Clwyd	40·9
Mid Glamorgan	33·5
Gwent	25·7
Powys	25·3
Dyfed	25·0
South Glamorgan	22·8
Gwynedd	15·2

[1] Aged as at August 1988, excluding rising fives, expressed as a percentage of the three and four-year-old population.

Infant Classes

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest figures for the percentage of under-fives in infant classes, by local education authority in Wales, in rank order.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information as at January 1989 is shown in the following table:

	Percentage of under-fives in infant classes[1]
Dyfed	38·3
Mid Glamorgan	33·5
Clwyd	32·8
West Glamorgan	32·7
Gwent	32·2
Gwynedd	30·4
Powys	26·1
South Glamorgan	24·6

[1] Aged as at August 1988, excluding rising fives, expressed as a percentage of the number of three and four-year-old population.

National Curriculum

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment his Department has made of the training required by primary school teachers for the implementation of the technology component of the national curriculum.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We have given high priority to the implementation of the national curriculum under the LEA training grant scheme and have allocated £350,000 specifically for the training of teachers in new technologies for 1990-91.

The Department and the Curriculum Council for Wales will be considering further what is required to implement technology in the national curriculum in the light of the recently completed consultations on the Secretary of State's proposals.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what urgent action he will take to increase the availability of specialist teachers in high schools to meet the requirements of the new curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We are taking the requirements of the national curriculum into account when setting intakes to initial teacher training; in the revision of the criteria for initial teacher training courses; and in deciding on the role and make-up of the LEA in-service training grant scheme and education support grants. The recruitment of teachers for shortage subjects is being helped by the provision of bursaries for students pursuing courses in those subjects. The pilot scheme of incentive supplements for Welsh-speaking graduates is aimed at increasing the pool of teachers capable of teaching through the medium of Welsh.

School Computers

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what grants are available to provide computers for *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools; and for each type of grant for the last available financial year, if he will state, in separate tables for primary and secondary schools (i) the cash allocation in total and by education authority, (ii) the number of schools that have received a cash allocation by education authority and (iii) the number of computers provided, by education authority.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Current provision of funding to equip primary and secondary schools to use information technology across the curriculum is in the form of education support grant allocated by bid to local education authorities. Provision for an advisory teacher service is also included in the funding. Grant to support eligible expenditure of £1,475,800 was made available in 1988-89 and grant to support eligible expenditure of £1,583,800 is available in the current financial year.

The tables show the figures for expenditure for each LEA, and figures supplied by LEAs of numbers of computers purchased in 1988-89.

Figures detailing LEA allocations of ESG to individual schools are not collected centrally.

1988-89: Expenditure eligible for ESG support by LEA for IT in Schools

LEA	*ESG allocation, £s*	*Including £s for hardware purchase*
Clwyd	161,200	51,200
Dyfed	228,700	126,700
Gwent	233,100	108,100
Gwynedd	122,400	47,400
Mid Glamorgan	316,900	153,900
Powys	59,500	21,500
South Glamorgan	199,400	92,400
West Glamorgan	134,600	44,600

1988-89: Numbers of computers purchased through ESG

	Secondary	*Primary*	*Special schools*
Clwyd	11	21	11
Dyfed	122	45	5
Gwent	118	0	0
Gwynedd	32	25	3
Mid Glamorgan	211	0	3
Powys	20	0	0
South Glamorgan	92	0	0
West Glamorgan	[1]	[1]	[1]

[1] Figures not yet supplied.

Cardiff Bay Development

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will make it his policy that compensation levels for firms in the Cardiff bay area which are required to move in order that development may proceed are set at levels which make their relocation viable and ensure that existing jobs are not lost to the area;

(2) if he will make it his policy that grants systems operated by his Department will be used to the best advantage in order to enable existing firms in the Cardiff bay area to *(a)* stay in business and *(b)* to create new job opportunities for the future;

(3) whether he will make it his policy that existing firms and jobs in the Cardiff bay area shall either *(a)* be retained within the area or *(b)* be assisted to relocate in or near the area.

Mr. Peter Walker: Compensation to firms required to move within or outside the area of Cardiff Bay development corporation will be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Land Compensation Act 1961, the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965 and the Land Compensation Act 1973. This legislation provides for payment to be made in respect of disturbance costs as well as for land and property acquired. If a company considers that an offer made is inadequate it may seek to have the level of compensation determined by the Lands Tribunal, an independent body established by Parliament.

Within this statutory framework it is the policy of Cardiff Bay development corporation to do whatever it can to protect the interests and the existing employment of firms within its area. The corporation has my fullest support in that. I am also anxious to ensure that, wherever appropriate, firms affected by the redevelopment of Cardiff bay should seize every opportunity to expand. To that end my Department is working closely with the corporation to ensure that every advantage is taken of regional selective assistance and other available measures of support to safeguard and create jobs.

As part of its policy the corporation is taking a range of specific initiatives:

—the engagement of Cardiff and Vale Enterprise to assist companies with business planning and the preparation of grant applications;

—making land available to ensure that firms remain within or close to the designated area;

—operating a scheme of business assistance to provide financial support to existing firms.

I understand that active discussions are currently taking place with the firms which may be affected by relocation.

Channel Tunnel

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will call a conference of local authorities, employers and trades unionists to consider how his Department might act in order to obtain better links for north and south Wales to the proposed Channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: British Rail has already consulted widely in preparation for its report on Channel tunnel rail services.

Proposals for road links which will benefit road users travelling between Wales and the Channel tunnel are included in "Roads for Prosperity" published by the Department of Transport and in "Roads in Wales 1989".

I have had talks with the chairman of British Rail after having had the views of many people interested in this matter.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what efforts he has made to improve the direct access of north and south Wales railway routes to the proposed Channel tunnel; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The chairman of British Rail is aware of the importance that my right hon. Friend and I attach to the provision of the best possible rail links between Wales and the Channel tunnel. Officials have taken part in British Rail's consultations on its plan of services for the tunnel. That report is now awaited.

Connah's Quay (Bypass)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will ensure that Clwyd county council's application for transport supplementary grant will be sufficient to ensure the early starting of the Connah's Quay and Shotton bypass; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Clwyd county council's bid for transport support grant in 1990-91 is being considered along with bids from other local highway authorities in Wales.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet members of *(a)* Connah's Quay town council, *(b)* Shotton town council, *(c)* Queensferry county council and *(d)* Sealand town council to discuss the urgent need for the Dee crossing and the Shotton and Connah's Quay bypass.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: No. This matter was fully discussed when my right hon. Friend met the hon. Gentleman and representatives of Alyn and Deeside district council on 18 October.

Schools (Funding)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet governors of schools of Clwyd local education authority to discuss with them the funding of schools under new legislation with particular reference to staffing; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We have no plans to do so but we are always willing to consider invitations to visit schools in Clwyd and elsewhere.

Gipsy Caravan Sites

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet members of the Queensferry and Deeside chamber of trade to hear their views concerning gipsy caravan sites; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Grist: No.

Mancot Hospital

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet the Friends of Mancot hospital to discuss with them the plans for Mancot hospital consequent upon the opening of Deeside community hospital.

Mr. Grist: Plans for the future of Mancot hospital are a matter for Clwyd health authority at this time. It would not be appropriate, therefore, for my right hon. Friend to meet the Friends of the hospital to discuss its future.

Ambulance Stations, Clwyd

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit ambulance stations of Clwyd health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: We have no present plans to do so. No visit is required for us to appreciate the role of the ambulance service in the provision of patient care. We would urge the trade unions involved in the present dispute to call off industrial action immediately and return to the negotiating table.

Health Funding (Clwyd)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit the headquarters of Clwyd health authority to hear members' views on funding; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I have no immediate plans to visit Clwyd health authority. I have been fully briefed on the financial position of health authorities in Wales as a result of my Department's annual round of review meetings with authorities in September and a meeting which I had with the chairman of the Welsh health authorities chairmen's committee last week. I am pleased to note that, although authorities are facing higher inflationary pressures than they budgeted for at the start of the financial year, they are taking responsible managerial action to ensure that their expenditure remains under control. I shall be taking account of their present position in determining hospital and community health services provision for 1990-91 about which I expect to make an announcement next month.

High Schools

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit the staff rooms of *(a)* Connah's Quay, *(b)* Queensferry, *(c)* Buckley, *(d)* Hope, *(e)* Darland and *(f)* Argoed high schools to seek members of staff's views of the new Education Act; and if he will make a statment.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We are always willing to consider invitations to visit schools within Clwyd or elsewhere in Wales. There has been and continues to be wide consultation on the implementation of the Education Reform Act and further views will be sympathetically considered.

Countryside Access

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what access to the countryside in Wales will be included in the proposed green Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Government's proposals for reorganisation of the countryside bodies will not affect existing statutory rights of access to the countryside.

Litter

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to combat the increase in litter in the Principality; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The government's proposals for combating litter were set out in the consultation paper "Action on Litter" a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House at the time of publication in July.

The responses to the paper are being considered at present and, subject to the results, the Government intend to introduce necessary legislation to enact these proposals at the earliest opportunity.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to make a statement on the details of the community charge as they affect Welsh districts and boroughs.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to him on Monday 6 November (Vol. 159, c. 663-64).

Transport Supplementary Grant

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he proposes to announce the award of transport supplementary grant to Welsh counties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: We expect to announce the transport grant settlement for 1990-91 shortly.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many waste disposal sites are situated in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Cardiff and *(c)* Swansea; and how many of these are licensed to take special wastes.

Mr. Grist: From the information provided by the waste disposal authorities, the following are the sites licensed:

Authority	Number of licensed sites
Newport	28
Cardiff	20
Swansea	24

Information on the types of waste permitted is held by the authorities, which are under a statutory duty to maintain public registers.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the total per capita spending in Wales for the past three years, excluding spending on social security.

Mr. Peter Walker: The latest available figures are in the answer my right hon. Friend the then Chief Secretary gave in his reply of 25 October 1988 (Vol. 139, c. *120-29*).

Water Loss

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will give a quantified breakdown of the ways in which water is lost by Welsh Water between the reservoir and the consumer;

(2) what information he has on the reasons why Welsh Water is losing 40 per cent. of the water collected in its reservoirs before reaching the consumer; and what steps he intends to take to bring that percentage loss in line with that of other water companies in England and Wales;

(3) what percentage of water is lost in the course of distribution by *(a)* Welsh Water and *(b)* any other company supplying water in any part in Wales;

(4) what target has been set for Welsh Water to achieve in order to reduce the percentage loss of water during the course of distribution; and by what date they are to reach that target.

Mr. Grist: These are matters which are the responsibility of Welsh Water plc. Some information is contained in the pathfinder prospectus, copies of which are in the Library.

Water Conservation

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the statutory provisions which relate to his powers in relation to the conservation of water by water companies operating in Wales and the methods of conservation to which they refer.

Mr. Grist: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

HEALTH

Breast Screening

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which National Health Service hospitals are involved in income generation schemes by offering private breast screening services; and *(a)* what are the names of the private firms with which they are collaborating, *(b)* what are the charges to the individual women who use the service and *(c)* who is responsible for monitoring the medical standards and practices of these schemes.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The information is not available in the form requested. My Department is aware of 11 health authorities offering breast screening services for which a charge is made. Two of these are in collaboration with private firms, Medical Diagnostics Ltd. and Priory Medical. In about half the schemes no charge is made to individual women as the costs are met by employers or charities and some are charged only at cost.

Guidance issued to health authorities in March 1989 specifically asked them to seek advice from my Department where issues of national policy were involved, such as breast and cervical screening. I have now advised health authorities that they should not seek to generate income from such screening.

Health authorities that developed schemes in advance of that guidance may be bound for the time being by contractual arrangements to provide some screening services additional to those available to National Health Service patients.

The health authorities concerned are:

Royal Marsden Hospital Special Health Authority
Hull
Leeds Western
South Bedfordshire
Barking, Havering and Brentwood
City and Hackney
West Essex
Canterbury and Thanet
Maidstone
Halton
Wigan

Private Nursing Homes

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list by location the private nursing homes in the Trent regional health authority; and what arrangements were made for health care organisations to have an input at the planning stage before they were opened.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Tables placed in the Library list the names of private nursing homes registered under section 23 of the Registered Homes Act 1984 in Trent regional health authority, by district health authority.

Guidance advises registering authorities to identify and seek contact with prospective nursing home owners at the earliest possible stage, to establish a co-operative relationship and assist the applicant to meet the conditions of registration.

Oil Seed Rape

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what conclusions his Department has reached on the results of the oil seed rape research project funded by Angus district council and Ninewells hospital on the relationship between oil seed rape and allergies, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what research or investigation his Department has made into the health problems connected with the oil seed rape crop; what finance has been allocated to such projects; and what plans he has to develop further the recent research financed by Angus district council and Ninewells hospital.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 8 November 1989 to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) at columns *684-85*.

Abortion

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what instructions his Department issues to doctors undertaking abortions on foreign women about their aftercare following the abortion;

(2) what medical formalities are required prior to an abortion for foreign women attending private clinics for termination of pregnancy.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: As for resident women, abortion is available for a foreign patient if two doctors certify in good faith that the risk to the life or injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant women or the existing children of her family would be greater if the pregnancy continued than if it were terminated. Decisions relating to the clinical care and follow-up of all abortion patients are matters for the individual doctors concerned.

Approved places are required to make special provision for counselling and aftercare of foreign patients including the provision of interpreters, own-language information leaflets, and discharge letters to the referring doctor in their own language.

Bed Provision

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the appropriate level of provision per bed of *(a)* blood gas machines, *(b)* resuscitation equipment, *(c)* ventilators and *(d)* central monitoring systems for heart patients, for general hospitals with acute services in urban areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: These are matters for decision by the appropriate senior managers of the relevant clinical care facilities, having regard to operating procedures, staffing levels, case mix and other appropriate factors.

Disabled People

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to increase opportunities for advocacy and representation for severely disabled people.

Mr. Freeman: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris), and the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on 7 November at column *556*.

Self-governing Hospitals

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the National Health Service hospitals which he has approved for self-governance.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply my right hon. and learned Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) on 3 November at columns *389-90*. We will not be able to approve any NHS trusts until Parliament has given approval to the necessary legislation. A total of 187 expressions of interest in NHS trust status have been received by the Department.

Cosmetic Mammary Glands

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what grounds it was decided not to make mammillas an integral part of a cosmetic mammary gland provided by the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Some brands available under the NHS are integral. It is for the consultant responsible to decide, in consultation with the patient, which type of prosthesis to prescribe.

Community Care

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial help has been given to each of the London borough councils towards the cost of community care in their boroughs of patients discharged from psychiatric hospitals.

Mr. Freeman: Resources for community care in general are made available from the main programme expenditure of health authorities and local authorities. Central Government support to local authorities is provided through block grant. This is an unhypothecated grant which is allocated as a whole and specific elements within it are not identifiable separately. Individual authorities are responsible for deciding how the total funds available to them are used in the light of local circumstances and legislative requirements. In addition, health authorities are allocated each year specific sums known as joint finance which are in part used to promote a shift from hospital to community care.

The Government recognise the need to ensure that discharges of seriously mentally ill people from hospital take place only when adequate services are available for them outside hospital. We propose to introduce a new funding structure for those seeking help from public funds for the cost of care as well as a new specific grant to encourage the development of social care for people with mental illness.

Rehabilitation Medicine

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time consultants are currently employed within the National Health Service in rehabilitation medicine.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not available, as rehabilitation medicine is not currently classified as a separate speciality. It will be separately classified from 1990.

Paramedics

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give figures for the last five years for the number of trained paramedics among ambulance personnel shown as a global figure and as a percentage of total ambulance personnel in each ambulance service.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: These figures are not held centrally.

1991 Census

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ensure that the 1991 census clearly identifies the number of homeless and those sleeping rough through choice.

Mr. Freeman: It is planned to identify separately numbers of people camping and people sleeping rough on census night, and to distinguish between the two groups. Like everyone else, people in each of these groups will be asked if the place where they are enumerated is their usual address.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make provision in the 1991 census for an organised body rather than the police and voluntary organisations to count the numbers of homeless sleeping rough.

Mr. Freeman: It is planned that the enumeration of people sleeping rough will be carried out as part of the general census enumeration by people appointed for the purpose by the registrars general.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to use a simplified form for the 1991 census for those who are homeless.

Mr. Freeman: In addition to questions about household circumstances, asked only about private households, it is planned that everyone in Great Britain will be asked to answer the same set of questions about himself or herself. There will, however, be special provisions for particular cases. One of these provisions will enable a return for a person sleeping rough who is not capable of completing his or her own return to be made by someone who is capable. Another provision will enable any person sleeping rough to authorise someone else to complete the return on his or her behalf.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans in the 1991 census to identify the number of those living at addresses care of people other than their own family.

Mr. Freeman: It is planned that numbers of people staying in communal establishments will be identified separately, as will numbers of people staying with private households who are not related to the person first mentioned on the census form for that household.

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the draft 1991 Census Order will be laid before Parliament; whether an ethnic group question will be included in the proposed content of the census; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and I have today laid before Parliament the draft Order in Council for a census to be taken in Great Britain on Sunday 21 April 1991. This order specifies the persons by whom and with respect to whom returns are to be made and the topics on which questions are to be asked.

The Government's proposals for the 1991 census of Great Britain were published in a White Paper (Cm. 430) in July 1988. All the topics that were then proposed are included in the draft order.

The White Paper stated that the Government proposed to include a question on ethnic group in the 1989 census test and to study the results before deciding whether such a question should be included in the final plans for the 1991 census. The responses to the ethnic group question in this voluntary test have now been assessed.

A follow-up survey, carried out as part of the test, showed that the question commanded a high degree of acceptance from all the main ethnic groups. Less than one half of 1 per cent. of households refused to take part in the voluntary test because of the ethnic group question. While 7 per cent. did voice objections when prompted, most of these had nevertheless answered the question. The proportion of black people who voiced objections when prompted (1 in 5) was higher than that of white and of Asian people (1 in 20) but only 1 per cent. of black respondents refused to take part in the test because of the ethnic group question. Few spontaneous comments adverse to the question were received from the public. The accuracy of answers to the question was acceptable.

These results indicate that the public at large, in all ethnic groups, is ready to accept and respond to this question in the census. The Government have therefore included the ethnic group question in the draft order for the 1991 census.

We hope that this decision will be welcomed by the many people and organisations who have expressed a need for the kind of statistical information the answers to this question and others will provide. Statistical information on ethnic group, together with that on, for example, housing, employment and age structure, will help central and local government and health authorities allocate resources and plan programmes, taking account of the needs of each group. It will also help employers and those providing services identify and tackle areas of racial disadvantage.

Copies of a summary of the ethnic group question results from the census test have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Copies of a census newsletter, containing a list of the proposed questions and their uses, and illustrations of how the questions will look on the census form, will be placed in the Libraries shortly.

Double Prescription Charges

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the drugs on which a double prescription charge is levied.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The general rule is that each drug or appliance which is supplied attracts a single prescription charge. If more than one drug is supplied, whether packaged together or separately, more than one charge is payable.

Nurses (Grants)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Western Isles, *Official Report*, 7 November, column 827, whether nurses on undergraduate courses will have their grants frozen and replaced with loans.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Students on nursing degree courses, like other students in full-time higher education, will have access to the additional resource provided by the top-up loan.

Mail Order Optical Services

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what measures are being taken to ensure that the rules for supply by mail order of spectacles, and contact lenses by or under the supervision of a doctor or an optician, are fully understood and complied with; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has received concerning greater enforcement of the rules governing the sale of mail order of contact lenses; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Section 21 of the Opticians Act 1958 clearly states that the sale of any optical appliance, including contact lenses, must be either effected by or supervised by a registered medical practitioner or registered optician. Anyone failing to comply with these requirements would be in breach of the terms of the Act and committing a criminal offence. It is the responsibility of the General Optical Council to ensure the standard and integrity of the ophthalmic professions and it would be for them to take action in such circumstances.

In addition, the General Optical Council also issues its own rules concerning the conduct and standard of the profession. This includes clear instructions on the sale of optical appliances. All medical practitioners and opticians must accept and agree to comply with these rules on registration. Failure to do so is a disciplinary offence and a matter for the General Optical Council.

Birmingham Children's Hospital

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children's heart operations have been performed in the Birmingham children's hospital since 1 April; and at what cost.

Mr. Freeman: From April to October this year, 206 open heart operations were performed at the Birmingham children's hospital. The cost of these operations cannot be disaggregated from the hospital's total spending.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has on *(a)* the number of children's heart operations scheduled to take place in the Birmingham children's hospital in the financial year 1989 to 1990 and *(b)* the financial resources allocated for those operations.

Mr. Freeman: The target for the number of open heart operations in Birmingham children's hospital in 1989-90 is 320. Financial resources required for those operations cannot be disaggregated from the total financial resources required by the hospital.

Central Manchester Health Authority

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place copies of his recent correspondence with Central Manchester health authority and with its chairman concerning self-governing status in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No.

Trafford Health Authority

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with Trafford health authority about proposals to reduce service levels in 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The Trafford health authority is responsible for planning hospital and community services in the districts within the resources made available to it by North West regional health authority. These resources have not yet been announced for 1990-91 but, as is usual, they have been asked to develop plans based on resource assumptions. They are required to maintain the level of services in 1990-91 and to ensure a balance of income and expenditure. It is for the Trafford health authority to formulate its plans and to submit them to the North Western regional health authority for agreement as part of the regional plan.

Asthma Clinics

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether asthma clinics will be included in the envisaged list of health promotion clinics that will attract payment if provided by general practitioners, pursuant to the scheme in "Working for Patients."

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Under arrangements to be introduced from 1 April 1990, family practitioner committees (FPCs) will have authority to approve health promotion clinics for remuneration purposes. Within the provisions of the statement of fees and allowances, FPCs will have discretion to decide which clinics, including asthma clinics, qualify.

"Registration: A Modern Service"

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received in response to his Green Paper, "Registration: A Modern Service" (Cm. 531); and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The consultation period on the Green Paper closed last March and it attracted more than 600 responses. There was a widespread welcome for its proposals for more structured management arrangements for the registration service, greater public choice in the area of civil marriage, and an opening up of historic registration records. Some new suggestions were received for changing and modernising the registration service, and these have received consideration. The Government are now formulating their views, which will be published in a White Paper early next year.

Karl McGoldrick

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the handling of the Karl McGoldrick case and child protection services in Cumbria.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Northern regional health authority is today publishing a report of an inquiry into the handling of the case of Karl McGoldrick chaired by Professor Anderson. I am grateful to him and his fellow inquiry members for the work they have put into the inquiry. The report identifies a number of serious shortcomings in the way in which the case was handled in 1986 and makes recommendations for the way in which these shortcomings can be avoided in future.

We are also publishing today the report of an inspection earlier this year by the social services inspectorate of child protection services in Cumbria. This report establishes that significant improvements have been

made in the services since the death of Karl McGoldrick, and identifies a number of further improvements which need to be made. The inspectorate will be following up these points as part of its normal programme of inspections.

Copies of both reports have been placed in the Library.

Accident and Emergency Facilities

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of accident and emergency facilities in the Islington, Hackney, Haringey and Bloomsbury authorities in respect of major accident procedures; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* After any major incident all the hospitals involved automatically review their procedures and update them according to any lessons learnt.

All the major incident casualty receiving hospitals in Islington, City and Hackney, Haringey and Bloomsbury district health authorities have recently revised or are currently revising their major incident procedures and all expect to have issued a revised programme guide by early in the new year.

Chemicals and Pesticides

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has issued any guidance to the Departments of Health and Social Security about their use of wood-preserving chemicals and pesticides.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 8 November 1989:]* Advice has been issued to all DH and DSS offices on the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) which came into force on 1 October 1989. Contractors using either pesticides or wood-preserving chemicals on DH/SS premises will be required to comply with both the COSHH Regulations and the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Pensioners

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many pensioners reside in the parliamentary constituency of Stockton, South; and what is the total amount dispensed in pensions for the current year.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I regret that information about the numbers of, or the amount paid to, retirement pensioners residing in a particular locality is not recorded. As at 31 March 1989, the latest date for which figures are available, the amount of retirement pension paid in Great Britain was £18·9 billion.

Elderly People (Residential Care)

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what evidence he has received from *(a)* Age Concern England, *(b)* the National Care Homes Association, *(c)* the Elderly Accommodation Counsel and *(d)* the Association of Charity Officers, on the cost of private and voluntary residential care for elderly people; and if he will publish that evidence;

(2) what evidence he has received from *(a)* the Abbeyfield Society, *(b)* the BEN Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund, *(c)* the National Federation of Housing Associations, *(d)* the Independent Hospitals Association, *(e)* the Royal United Beneficent Association, *(f)* Methodist Homes for the Aged and *(g)* Counsel and Care for the Ederly, of the cost of private and voluntary residential care for elderly people; and if he will publish that evidence;

(3) what evidence he has received from *(a)* the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, *(b)* the Occupational Benevolent Funds Alliance, *(c)* Brendoncare, *(d)* East Wansdyke Advice Network, *(e)* Oxfordshire Welfare Rights and *(f)* London Homes for the Elderly, of the cost of private and voluntary residential care for elderly people; and if he will publish that evidence.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We receive a considerable number of views and representations from a variety of interested organisations and individuals who are entitled to have their communications treated as confidential. For this reason, it is not our practice to publish material sent to us, though the organisations and individuals concerned are free to do so if they wish.

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many claims have been allowed on the independent living fund in the last available period; what was the total number of applications made; and if he will show the claims allowed in bands of £25.

Mr. Scott: The first annual report of the trustees of the independent living fund was published on 6 November and contains information based on a sample of the caseload for the first year of the fund's operation. A copy has been placed in the Library.

From 1 April 1989 to 31 October 1989 a further 7,132 applications were received by the fund, with 1,677 of these resulting in payment by 31 October 1989. A breakdown of the fund's payments at 8 November 1989 into bands of £25 is as follows:

Weekly payments £	*Number of clients*
0- 24·99	532
25- 49·99	618
50- 74·99	354
75- 99·99	205
100-124·99	96
125-149·99	76
150-174·99	57
175-199·99	36
200-224·99	27
225-249·99	11
250-274·99	14
275-299·99	7
300-324·99	5
325-349·99	4
350-374·99	1
375-399·99	2
400-424·99	2
425-499·99	4
Total caseload	2,051

Disability

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what guidance he has issued to his Department's local offices regarding eligibility of disabled 16 and 17-years-olds for income support.

Mr. Scott: Guidance is contained in the adjudication officer's guide. A copy is available in the Library.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he is taking to improve training to local social security offices on benefits available to disabled young people.

Mr. Scott: All local offices have staff trained to answer inquiries and give advice about social security benefits for the disabled, including disabled young people. Training material is regularly reviewed, revised and updated to take account of changes and improvements to disability benefits. If my hon. Friend has a particular case in mind perhaps he would write to me.

Elderly People

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make it his policy to include all former carers in his Department's regulations defining circumstances when the value of a property can be ignored in assessment for income support when an elderly person has entered residential care where such former carers will be rendered homeless by the sale of the property.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Carers may benefit from the existing disregards for property in the circumstances described in the reply to the hon. Member on 4 July 1989 at columns *139-40*. We have no plans, at present, to change that policy.

Disability Benefits

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how he intends to consult disability organisations on their views on how to improve the social security system for disabled people.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 23 October at columns *341-42*.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, in his review of disability benefits, he will make provision to help people who are blind with their additional mobility costs.

Mr. Scott: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security announced on 25 October our intention to extend mobility allowance to people who are deaf and blind. The change will give £26·25 a week more to some 3,000 people. Further proposals concerning disability benefits will be announced in the next few months.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether his review of disability benefits will draw on independent advice; and when he will announce a timetable for the review.

Mr. Scott: The OPCS surveys of disability in Great Britain constitute the most independent and extensive investigation into and of the circumstances of disabled people, and they have attracted a large number of comments from individuals and organisations representing disabled people. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security announced on 25 October our intention within the next few months to bring forward proposals drawing on the survey results and the comments received. These will be aimed at improving the balance and structure of social security benefits for disabled people.

Community Charge Rebates

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by each charging authority in England the income level at which *(a)* a single person aged under 25 years, *(b)* a single person aged over 25 years, *(c)* a single pensioner, *(d)* a pensioner couple, and *(e)* a couple with two children, all with no savings, would lose entitlement to community charge rebate assuming the Department of the Environment's illustrative community charge figures for 1990-91 published on 7 November.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Crisis Loans

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list by his Department's regions the number of young people aged 16 and 17 years who have claimed a social security crisis loan since April 1988, to enable them to gain accommodation, and the number of claims granted.

Mr. Scott: Details of crisis loan awards by region and by local offices are available in the Library. Statistical data concerning the ages of applicants are not collected.

Voluntary Unemployment

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has received a report on the research on penalties for voluntary unemployment commissioned by his Department; and when he expects to publish it.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) on 8 November at columns *672-73*.

National Insurance Fund

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has received the Government Actuary's quinquennial report on the National Insurance Fund; and when he expects to publish it.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not yet received the report of the Government Actuary and now expects that it will be available early in the new year.

War Disability Pensions

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security which social security benefits *(a)* are and *(b)* are not restricted because payment of a war disability pension is taken into account when assessing relevant income.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: War disablement pensions are taken into account as income only in the income-related

benefits—income support, family credit and housing benefit—after £5 has been disregarded. This statutory disregard will be doubled to £10 from next April, a change which will also apply to community charge benefit.

Local authorities are responsible for administering housing benefit and community charge benefit. They have discretion to disregard more of war disablement pensions in calculating entitlement, but the cost of exercising this discretion has to be borne by the local authority itself.

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when, and in what way, he intends to give effect to his recent announcement to end the restriction on availability of attendance allowance for severely disabled children under two years old; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The lower age limit for entitlement to attendance allowance will be abolished with effect from next April. The necessary regulations will be laid before Parliament in due course.

Child Benefit

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many standard rate taxpayers receive child benefit, excluding those on family credit; how many higher rate taxpayers receive child benefit; and what is the cost of paying child benefit to such families in each case;

(2) how much he would save by withdrawing child benefit from higher rate taxpayers.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 2 November 1989]:* The number of families in receipt of child benefit, excluding those on family credit, who are standard rate taxpayers is estimated for 1989-90 as 4·5 million, with a child benefit cost of approximately £3 billion. The estimate of the number of families paying higher rate tax is 0·5 million, with a child benefit cost of around £300 million.

EMPLOYMENT

Nuclear Generation (Safety)

94. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many workers in the nuclear generating industry have been killed or injured since the programme started; and what are the corresponding figures for the coal, oil and gas industries.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information is provided in the table.

Injuries to employees in power industries in Great Britain reported to enforcing authorities.

Industry	[5] *Fatal Injuries (1978-1985 and 1986-87—1987-88)*	[5] [6] *Major Injuries (1981-1985 and 1986-1987—1987-88)*	[7] *Over 3 Day Injuries (1986-87—1987-88)*
Nuclear Power Generating [1]	5	41	103
Coal Mining [2]	359	5,360	19,453
Off-shore Installations for Oil and Gas Extraction [3]	81	592	1,144
Gas Production and Distribution [4]	4	395	4,916

[1] Reported to HSE's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate.

[2] Reported to HSE's Inspectorate of Mines and Quarries. Includes injuries in the open-cast coal mining sector except for over three day injuries occuring in 1986-87 for which data is not available.

[3] Reported to the Petroleum Engineering Division of the Department of Energy.

[4] Reported to HSE's Factory Inspectorate.

[5] Excludes injuries occurring during the period 1 January to 31 March 1986.

[6] The Major injury category was introduced by the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurencies Regulations, 1980 (NADOR) on 1 January 1981. The data includes injuries reported under these Regulations and under the widened definition employed under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 1985 (RIDDOR), introduced 1 April 1986.

[7] Injuries causing absence from work for more than three days reported under RIDDOR. Data for earlier years are not available or not compiled on a comparable basis.

Benefits

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Leeds, West on 28 July, *Official Report*, column *1045*, what information is collected about disqualification from unemployment benefit.

Mr. Eggar: All decisions on claims for unemployment benefit are made by the independent adjudicating authorities. These are firstly an adjudication officer, on appeal a social security appeal tribunal, and on further appeal, on a point of law only, a social security commissioner.

Analyses of adjudication officers' decisions are published quarterly by the Department of Social Security, under the title "Unemployment Benefit Statistics, Quarterly Analysis of Decisions of Adjudication Officers". These show the numbers of adjudication officers' decisions in each category of question of doubt, together with the number of cases allowed, and the number disallowed or disqualified. These publications are available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons in the West Midlands region were disqualified from receiving unemployment benefit during the period 1 January to 31 March because they were considered to have left their employment voluntarily without just cause and successfully appealed against disqualification.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 28 July 1989 at column 1050. The number of persons who successfully appeal against the decision to disqualify unemployment benefit because they were

considered to have left their employment voluntarily without just cause are not separately identified from other claimants who successfully appeal against the decision of an adjudication officer.

Key Training

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many employees of his Department, and of what grades, have been seconded to Key Training of 10 Eaton place, Reading, in each of the last five years; and how many of these have since left the Department.

Mr. Eggar: There have been no such secondments in the last five years.

Tourism

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the top 10 tourist attractions in Cambridgeshire in numbers visiting or attending; and if he will indicate the numbers in each instance for the years 1986, 1987 and 1988.

Mr. Nicholls: Figures for the English and East Anglia tourist boards show the following numbers visiting attractions in Cambridgeshire.

	Number of visits
1986	
King's College Chapel	[1]750,000
Imperial War Museum, Duxford	360,000
Fitzwilliam Museum	205,000
Wimpole Home Farm	77,474
Nene Valley Railway	[1]68,489
Wimpole Valley	61,131
Anglesey Abbey	58,937
University Botanic Garden	[1]55,000
Peakirk Wildlife Trust	51,315
Kettle's Yard	40,000
1987	
King's College Chapel	[1]750,000
Imperial War Museum, Duxford	396,000
Fitzwilliam Museum	260,000
Linton Zoo	[1]80,000
Wimpole Home Farm	69,780
Anglesey Abbey	57,191
University Botanic Garden	[1]55,000
Wimple Hall	54,336
Peakirk Wildlife Trust	54,336
Willersmill Fish Farm and Wild Animal Sanctuary	[1]38,000
1988	
Kings College Chapel	[1]750,000
Imperial War Museum, Duxford	376,302
Fitzwilliam Museum	249,000
Wimpole Home Farm	91,529
Linton Zoo	[1]80,000
Nene Valley Railway	[1]68,000
Wimpole Hall	62,281
Anglesey Abbey	61,257
Peakirk Wildlife Trust	55,350
University Botanic Garden	55,000

[1] Estimates.

Note: 1986 visitor numbers are not available for Linton Zoo and 1987 figures are not available for Nene Valley Railway.

Unemployment

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Employmemt what specific steps he is taking to reduce unemployment on Merseyside; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: My Department, through its employment service and Training Agency, operates a wide range of employment, enterprise and training measures, which are all available in Merseyside, as elsewhere.

In addition, as in other inner city areas, a number of initiatives have been adopted aimed at helping unemployed people in Liverpool to find employment, and at encouraging employers to recruit local unemployed people. Since April the Liverpool city action team has approved 26 employment and training projects.

During the 12 months to September 1989 unemployment in the Merseyside county has fallen by 20,294—18·9 per cent. of the September 1988 figure.

Disabled People

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) by what means the availability of the adaptations to premises and equipment scheme is made known to disabled people and their potential employers;

(2) by what means the availability of the job introduction scheme is made known to disabled people and their potential employers.

Mr. Eggar: Information about the adaptations to premises and equipment and job introduction schemes is made available to disabled people and their potential or actual employers through employment service staff, particularly disablement resettlement officers and, in the case of employers, the disablement advisory service, leaflets describing the schemes, and other organisations who advise people with disabilities. The code of good practice on the employment of disabled people, of which 120,000 copies have been distributed, also describes the schemes.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many disabled people benefit from the adaptations to the premises and equipment scheme in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Eggar: The number of disabled people who benefited from the adaptation to premises and equipment scheme in each of the last 10 years was:

	Number
1979-80	94
1980-81	83
1981-82	93
1982-83	117
1983-84	170
1984-85	145
1985-86	165
1986-87	253
1987-88	252
1988-89	247

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many disabled people received assistance through the job introduction scheme in each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Eggar: The number of people with disabilities who received assistance through the job introduction scheme in each of the past 10 years was:

	Number
1979-80	1,504
1980-81	1,072
1981-82	1,434

	Number
1982-83	1,295
1983-84	1,850
1984-85	2,033
1985-86	1,828
1986-87	1,460
1987-88	1,629
1988-89	2,090

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many disablement resettlement officers were employed by his Department in each of the years 1979 to 1989.

Mr. Eggar: In April 1989, a total of 488 members of staff in the employment service were undertaking disablement resettlement officer duties, of whom 333 were doing so full time. I regret that comparable figures are not available for previous years.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were registered as disabled under the provisions of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 in each of the years 1978 to 1989.

Mr. Eggar: The numbers of people registered under the provisions of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 in April of each of the years from 1978 to 1989 were:

	Numbers
1978	494,877
1979	482,006
1980	470,588
1981	460,178
1982	447,259
1983	433,177
1984	420,475
1985	404,170
1986	389,273
1987	383,439
1988	374,238
1989	366,768

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will make a statement on the underspending of amounts estimated for the job introduction scheme to assist people with disability to seek employment in 10 of the last years;

(2) if he will make a statement on the underspending of amounts estimated for the adaptations to premises and equipment scheme to assist people with disabilities in seven of the last 10 years.

Mr. Eggar: In estimating each year expenditure on the special schemes for people with disabilities, the Department seeks to ensure that provision is adequate to meet likely demand. That can inevitably result in overprovision for particular schemes. The Department is able to use funds not needed for a particular scheme to meet the demand arising on the other schemes. Over the 10 years 1979-80 to 1988-89, expenditure on the job introduction scheme increased from £297,201 to £614,000, on the adaptations to premises and equipment scheme from £50,000 to £423,000 and on all the special schemes together from £796,961 to £5,668,949. This very substantial increase in expenditure demonstrates the success of the disablement advisory service and other departmental staff in making the help available more widely known to employers and people with disabilities.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the training period for disablement resettlement officers; and how this has changed during the last 10 years.

Mr. Eggar: The current training period for disablement resettlement officers is six months. This includes attending national training courses, local project work, use of self-learning packs and on-the-job coaching. Between 1975 and 1983 the training programme for DROs was seven weeks, mainly devoted to national training courses.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which organisations of disabled people he has consulted and which ones he intends to consult before determining future Government policy towards the operation of the quota scheme for disabled people.

Mr. Eggar: The quota scheme is among the matters being considered in the internal review of services for people with disabilities which my Department has been undertaking. In conducting the review, account has been taken of views expressed previously by a wide range of organisations and individuals. We intend to seek comments from all major organisations of and for people with disabilities on the consultative document which will be published on completion of the review. Copies of this document will also be available to others who express an interest, and their comments will be welcomed.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects to announce the conclusions of the ministerial review of employment provision for disabled people.

Mr. Eggar *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* The review is at an advanced stage. The consultative document which will follow the review will be published as soon as possible.

New Claimants (Cumnock)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the current establishment, at each grade, of the unemployment benefit office at Cumnock; how many deal directly with interviewing of new claimants, what representations he has received concerning the lack of staff to deal with claimants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar *[pursuant to his reply, 2 November 1989, c. 307]:* I regret that the information given in my reply of 2 November was incorrect due to one staff member being listed twice. The correct information is as follows:

The number of staff in each grade is as follows:

	Number
Higher Executive Officer	1
Executive Officer	[1]3
Administrative Officer	14
Administrative Assistant	[2]5

[1] Of which 1 is an Administrative Officer on temporary promotion.
[2] Of which 1 is a Casual Employee.

One executive officer deals directly with new claimants, with a second executive officer having an element of interviewing within his post. Area management met the trade union side on 2 October to discuss area issues including staffing requirements. It has subsequently been agreed that the third executive officer post would be filled on a permanent basis.

SCOTLAND

Local Government Finance

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the collection of the community charge.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The responsibility for collecting community charges lies with local authorities. Indications are however that good progress is being made in collection with over 96 per cent. of people having paid in some areas.

Mr. Norman Hogg: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of persons, expressed as a percentage of those liable, who have paid or are paying the poll tax in Cumbernauld and Kilsyth district.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This information is not held centrally.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations he has had with the chairmen of *(a)* British Nuclear Fuels plc and *(b)* the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority regarding the future management and ownership of the nuclear power stations in Scotland after vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act.

Mr. Lang: There have been no such consultations.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what consultations he has carried out with the chairman-designate of Scottish Nuclear Ltd. about the future management and ownership of Scottish nuclear power stations after vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act.

(2) what consultations he has had with the chairman of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board regarding the future management and ownership of nuclear power stations in Scotland after vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act 1989.

Mr. Lang: *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* My right hon. and learned Friend and I met the chairmen of the South of Scotland electricity board and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board and the chairman-designate of Scottish Nuclear Limited on 8 November to discuss these matters. There have also been regular and full discussions of these matters between my officials and the boards.

Sea Lice

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of ctenolabrus rupestris, the gold sinny wrasse, as the alternative to pesticides as a means of removing sea lice from salmon in fish farms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The possible use of gold sinny wrasse to control sea lice infestation in farmed salmon is being investigated in trials by the Institute of Fishery Technology Research in Norway and in Scotland by the Sea Fish Industry Authority's sea farming unit in conjunction with the salmon farming industry. Preliminary results in aquarium observations and small-scale field trials with wrasse taken from the wild suggest that numbers of sea lice on farmed salmon are reduced in enclosures shared by wrasse.

The viability of this method for large-scale and long-term control of sea lice is uncertain as yet. Sea cage trials are still at a relatively early stage but the results of current work will be of considerable interest.

Investigation of other possible alternative controls on sea lice is also in progress. In particular, the Scottish Salmon Growers Association have commissioned the Institute of Aquaculture at the university of Stirling to investigate alternative treatment methods and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland is co-ordinating a large-scale project, part-funded by the European Communities research programme into possible development of a vaccine treatment. It is not possible to say if or when positive results or practical methods of treatment might emerge from these investigations.

Female General Practitioners

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many female general practitioners there are in practice in Scotland; and how many there were in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply given on 20 October 1989 to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Wray).

Sand-eels

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Western Isles, 4 April, *Official Report*, column *160*, if he will state the size of the sand-eel catches in ICES Division VIa in 1989, the amount of fishing effort directed towards sand-eel fishing, the percentage of the catch by weight made up of O-group and I-group fish, and the home ports of vessels concerned.

Mr. Lang: The information available is set out in the table. Data on the breakdown of catches into age groups are not yet available.

1989 Landings of sand-eels from ICES Division VIa by United Kingdom vessels

Base district	*Vessels involved*	*Landings tonnes*	*Fishing effort*	
			Days absent	*Hours fished*
Fraserburgh	5	—	—	—
Stornoway	4	—	—	—
Shetland	2	—	—	—
Aberdeen, Macduff, Mallaig, Orkney	4	—	—	—
TOTAL	15	18,785	308	2,313

Labour Statistics

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many construction industry workers were unemployed in Scotland at the latest available date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: There is no analysis of the monthly unemployment count by occupation. However, the labour force survey provides information on the previous occupation of those who are unemployed. The latest information, from the 1988 labour force survey, shows that in spring 1988, on the basis of the ILO definition, there were an estimated 20,000 unemployed persons in the construction industry in Scotland.

The Scottish construction industry has prospered well in 1989 with orders and output for the first half of the year at the highest levels since 1978 and 1980, respectively. Orders in the first half of 1989 were up 26·6 per cent. in real terms on those of the same period in 1988 and point to continued strong growth of output and improving employment prospects over the next 12 months.

The latest Building Employer's Confederation state of trade inquiry shows that a net 73 per cent. of Scottish firms expect an increase in their workload over the coming year.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the level of unemployment of young people in Scotland at the latest available date.

Mr. Lang: In July 1989, the latest date for which the information is available, there were 72,740 young people aged between 18 and 24 unemployed in Scotland. In the past two years the number of unemployed in this age group in Scotland has fallen by more than 32,000, a drop of almost one third.

Unemployment

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to reduce unemployment in the construction industry in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: There are no employment measures specifically directed at the construction industry in Scotland. The Government aim to help all unemployed people take advantage of the opportunities that exist through job clubs, job start, restart and travel-to-interview schemes. As part of their usual services, jobcentres display vacancies for all industries. In addition, employment training enables unemployed people to gain and update the skills they need to compete in the labour market.

Sheepmeat Quotas

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what impact he assesses the proposed European Community proposals for sheepmeat quotas will have in the Highland areas of Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There are no Community proposals for sheepmeat quotas. The new sheepmeat regime agreed by the Council of Ministers in July will however introduce a headage limit on the payment of ewe premium as from 1 January 1990. Producers in the less-favoured areas (LFAs) will be able to receive full premium on their first 1,000 eligible ewes and premium paid at 50 per cent. on any additional ewes; there is no upper limit on the number of ewes on which premium may be claimed. In 1988 some 696 of the 15,016 producers in Scotland's LFAs would have been affected by the headage limit. However, individual members of groups, associations or other forms of co-operation between producers may qualify for individual headage limits. The Government secured a commitment from the Council of Ministers that this provision would extend to partnerships in Scots law. Until the 1990 ewe premium application forms are returned it will not be possible to say how many Scottish producers have been affected by the headage limit.

Ministerial Conduct

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whan he intends to reply to the letter of 14 October from the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North concerning the conduct of the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth).

Mr. Rifkind: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my letter to him dated 9 October. I have nothing further to add to that.

Drift Net Fishing

Mr. Douglas: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to review section 39 of the Salmon Act 1986 with regard to drift net fishing.

Mr. Lang: I refer to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on 19 October to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood).

Threatening Telephone Calls

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will consider strengthening the Scottish criminal law against persons making anonymous and threatening or abusive telephone calls; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Any person identified as having made such calls may be prosecuted for an offence under the Telecommunications Act 1984, where the maximum penalty would be a £400 fine. In serious cases, such a person may be prosecuted for any one or more of a range of common law offences, for which, if taken on indictment before the High Court, the maximum penalties would be an unlimited fine and life imprisonment. I consider these sanctions to be adequate.

Farming Subsidies

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are, for each year since 1979, the total subsidies, direct or indirect, given to farmers in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Detail of direct subsidy payments is given in the table. The figures include the estimated Scottish share of market support expenditure incurred by the intervention board for agricultural produce. They exclude educational, advisory, research and development services provided by, among others, the Scottish agricultural colleges and Scottish agricultural research institutes and the Department. Information on indirect subsidies, for example, the benefit of exemption from rating, is either not available or could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Assistance to Scottish Farmers

Year	Amount £ million
[1]1989-90	240·3
1988-89	243·9
1987-88	229·1
1986-87	188·4
1985-86	274·6
1984-85	220·0
1983-84	209·6
1982-83	164·2
1981-82	123·5
1980-81	129·3
1979-80	80·0

[1] Estimated.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total per capita spending in Scotland for the past three years, excluding spending on social security.

Mr. Rifkind: The latest available figures are in the reply which my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury gave on 25 October 1988, at columns *120-29*.

SSEB

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the South of Scotland electricity board; what matters were discussed; and what was the outcome.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend and I met the chairman of the South of Scotland electricity board on 8 November to discuss the future ownership of nuclear power stations.

GPs' Salaries

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the salary band for general practitioners in Scotland, showing the highest paid and the lowest paid.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: GPs are not paid on a salary band, but are independent contractors, in contract with health boards to provide general medical services. Their target average remuneration is set by the Government each year on the recommendation of the doctors and dentists review body, and the figure for the current year is £31,105. Information about payments to individual doctors is not held centrally, but I shall write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Capercaillie

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has regarding the current population of capercaillie; and if he has any plans to arrest their decline.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 18 October 1989]:* I am informed that on the best available estimate, the current population of capercaillie is in excess of 2,000 birds. However, as the species is not censused over its entire range, the exact figure is not known. The Forestry Commission has recently funded a three-year research contract with the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology. This study is investigating how capercaillie use non-native coniferous plantations and will aim to produce guidelines on ways in which the quality of plantations can be improved to provide a better habitat for the species.

Nurses

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by health district *(a)* the current nursing staff establishment, *(b)* the number in post at the latest available date and *(c)* the number who had left the National Health Service in the preceding year.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* The current nursing staff establishment of health boards is not held centrally. The total number of nursing staff in post, including qualified and unqualified staff and those in training, is shown in table 1. Information about the number of nursing staff leaving the NHS is available only for qualified staff and relates to the year ending 30 September 1988. This information is shown in table 2. The total includes some nurses who left to join health authorities in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Table 1
Total nursing staff, 31 March 1989 (provisional)

Health Board	Total
Argyll and Clyde	5,668
Ayrshire and Arran	4,034
Borders	1,378
Dumfries and Galloway	2,305
Fife	4,021
Forth Valley	4,112
Grampian	7,345
Greater Glasgow	17,917
Highland	2,794
Lanarkshire	6,318
Lothian	10,871
Orkney	233
Shetland	263
Tayside	6,911
Western Isles	382
CSA	277
Scotland	74,829

Table 2
Qualified nurses leaving National Health Service in Scotland, year ending 30 September 1988

Health Board	Leavers
Argyll and Clyde	254
Ayrshire and Arran	238
Borders	89
Dumfries and Galloway	124
Fife	221
Forth Valley	198
Grampian	445
Greater Glasgow	906
Highland	166
Lanarkshire	313
Lothian	777
Orkney	11
Shetland	24
Tayside	351
Western Isles	28
CSA	2
Scotland	4,047

Housing Improvement Grants

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the number of applications received by local authorities for housing improvement grants *(a)* before 1 April 1984 and *(b)* thereafter.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* Information on the number of improvement grant applications received by local authorities is not held centrally.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what resources have been made available to provide housing improvement grants for applications made *(a)* before 1 April 1990 and *(b)* after 1 April 1990, in 1988-89 and 1989-90; and what is the expected allocation in 1990-91.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* Capital expenditure allocations to enable councils to provide house improvement grants are not made in respect of applications made during particular periods. It is for councils to decide how to target the available resources and how to exercise their discretion in respect of applications for discretionary grants. The one exception is that we have in recent years made extra resources available to assist in the clearance of backlogs of applications lodged before 31 March 1984 when a different grant regime operated. I expect to announce allocations for 1990-91 in the usual way later in the year.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his current estimate of the Exchequer proceeds from the sale of the Scottish electricity companies, excluding their nuclear assets, net of flotation and advertising costs.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* The market value of the Scottish electricity companies will depend on a wide range of factors, including the profitability of the companies, their capital structures, their future prospects and the state of the market. It is, therefore, too early to estimate the likely proceeds for the sale of the companies.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his most up-to-date estimate of the level of tax losses to be carried forward in the balance sheets of the Scottish electricity companies under the terms of the Electricity Act 1989.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* The tax position of the Scottish electricity boards is a matter for the boards and the Inland Revenue and is currently the subject of negotiations. The level of tax losses available to the future Scottish electricity companies will be determined in accordance with schedule 11 to the Electricity Act.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his most up-to-date estimate on the level of capital write-offs to be made to the balance sheets of the Scottish electricity boards and their successor companies, under the terms of the Electricity Act 1989.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* Asset values in the accounts of the Scottish electricity boards are a matter for the boards and their respective auditors. The structure of the balance sheets of the successor companies to the Scottish electricity boards has not yet been decided.

Nuclear Power

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has for capping the liability of Scottish Nuclear Ltd. to decommissioning and nuclear waste management costs after vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act 1989.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement made to the House on 9 November by my right hon. and learned Friend.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Scotch Whisky

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what subject he discussed at his last meeting with representatives of the Scotch whisky industry.

Mr. Curry: My hon. Friends the Minister of State and the Parliamentary Secretary met representatives of the Scotch Whisky Association at separate meetings on 22 November 1988. Among the issues discussed were the current state of the negotiations on the European Community's spirit drinks regulation and improving the competitive position for the industry in Japan.

Sugar Beet

Mr. Cox: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total acreage of sugar beet grown in the United Kingdom in the current year.

Mr. Curry: We expect a total of 194,000 ha of sugar beet to be harvested in the current campaign, out of a planted area of 195,674 ha.

Egg Marketing

Mr. Beith: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) how many retail premises were visited by the regional egg marketing inspector during his visit to Northumberland on 1 and 2 November; and what was the cost to public funds of the travel involved in this visit;

(2) whether his Department received a request from Northumberland county council trading standards department prior to 1 November for assistance relating to the enforcement of egg marketing rules in respect of the Good Life Shop, Wooler.

Mr. Curry: The regional egg marketing inspector visited Northumberland on 1 and 2 November as part of his normal duties. As such, his itinerary included visits to the Ministry divisional office at Newcastle, a meeting with the county council's trading standards department at Alnwick, and providing training at an authorised packing centre in addition to the advisory visit to the Good Life Shop, Wooler. That last mentioned visit was not made as the result of a specific request from the trading standards department, although the inspectorate routinely gives assistance to trading standards departments, and no other retail premises were visited on this occasion.

Poultry and Egg Testing

Mr. Beith: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the order setting out revised rules for the testing of small poultry flocks was printed; on what date it

came into force; and how many printed copies have so far been made available to local authorities, the trade and the public.

Mr. Maclean: The Poultry Laying Flocks (Testing and Registration etc) Order 1989 and the Poultry Breeding Flocks and Hatcheries (Registration and Testing) Order 1989 came into effect on 26 October 1989. Printed copies will be available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office shortly. Copies of the orders as made available to the House and information leaflets have been sent to the local authority associations and 61 other interested organisations. Copies are also available on request from local Ministry offices.

Gumboro Disease (Poultry)

Mr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, if he will make a statement about the current incidence of gumboro disease in poultry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maclean: Latest estimates suggest that the virulent strain of gumboro disease that first manifested itself in October 1988 is killing 15 per cent. or more of the birds in affected flocks. Total losses to the broiler sector from the disease since May this year are in excess of 5 million birds. It is believed that more than 500,000 replacement pullets have also been lost.

Mr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to prevent the spread of the viral disease gumboro in poultry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: My Department is liaising fully with the industry on this urgent problem. Two companies have now been authorised by the veterinary medicines directorate to conduct trials on new live vaccines. The granting of product licences for these vaccines will depend on receiving satisfactory data, including results from trials, in accordance with the Medicines Act. Every priority will be given to these applications.

PCB Pollution

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what effects his Department has observed on the marine algae and molluscs resultant from PCB pollution.

Mr. Curry: No effects have been observed in algae or molluscs that could be attributed to the concentrations of PCBs present in sea water around the United Kingdom.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has on PCB poisoning in fish in British coastal waters.

Mr. Curry: There is no evidence that present levels of PCBs are causing harm to fish in British coastal waters.

Nitrates

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will take steps to control the sale and distribution of nitrate fertilisers as a means of curbing the nitrate pollution of public water supplies.

Mr. Curry: No. Restrictions on the availability of nitrogen fertilisers would be an ineffective and costly means of tackling the nitrate problem. My Department does, however, advise farmers on the avoidance of excessive or untimely fertiliser usage, and is currently carrying out local consultations in 21 candidate areas for a pilot nitrate scheme within which a range of voluntary agricultural restrictions, including fertiliser limitations, will be tested.

Milk

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the production and consumption of milk within the European Economic Community in the current year; and what were the comparable figures in each of the two previous years.

Mr. Curry: European Community estimates are as follows:

Million tonnes

	1987	*1988*	[1] *1989*
Production	111·8	109·7	108·8
Consumption	95·5	95·9	98·4

[1] Estimated.

Consumption figures include all dairy products and are expressed in whole milk equivalent, calculated on a milk fat basis. 1989 figures are provisional and subject to revision.

Salmonella

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what are the regulations and procedures for testing for salmonella in *(a)* eggs and *(b)* poultry flocks (i) in Britain and (ii) of eggs imported into Britain and the flocks from whence they came; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The requirements for testing for salmonella in Great Britain are set out in the orders made under the Animal Health Act 1981 which came into effect on 26 October 1989. In relation to imports, I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) on 1 November, *Official Report*, column *210*.

Pesticides

Mr. Paice: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if, further to his answer to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) of 21 July, *Official Report*, column *410*, he will indicate when he expects the review of staffing levels within the Pesticide Data Evaluation Unit to be finalised;

(2) whether the review of staffing levels within the Pesticide Data Evaluation Unit has implications for minimising the waiting time for approval of new and reapproval of old pesticides.

Mr. Maclean: The scientific complement of the unit has been increased progressively from 42 at October 1988 to 60 today. Special increases in pay have also been awarded to improve recruitment and retention of staff.

Further consideration is being given to staffing levels to ensure that waiting times are minimised.

Phosphates

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the results of fieldwork sponsored by his Department on the effect of organophosphates on partridges.

Mr. Curry: My Department has sponsored projects on the effects of organophosphates on birds but none of these has covered partridges.

Animal Feed (Contamination)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the abattoirs which have received cattle from farms suspected of having eaten lead contaminated feed since the end of September; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: No cattle have been permitted to move off farms subject to restrictions except under Ministry consent. No information is available concerning the movement of cattle from farms prior to the imposition of restrictions. The Department of Health has confirmed that on the evidence available no hazard to human health arises from this incident.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) on what date he was warned by the Dutch Government that lead contaminated feed had been imported into the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when he first suspected that there was a problem with lead contaminated cattle feed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Dutch Embassy warned the legal department of MAFF on the afternoon of Wednesday 1 November that a specified consignment of contaminated feed had been imported into the United Kingdom. My Department has therefore identified the farms concerned and restricted the movement of meat and milk from them.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to ensure that lead contaminated meat and offal from cattle suspected of having eaten lead contaminated feed are not entering the food chain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I have used my powers under part I of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 to prohibit the movement and slaughter of cattle from affected farms, or the marketing of meat or milk products which might be derived from them.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the creameries which have received milk from cows suspected of having eaten lead contaminated feed since the end of September; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Because of the complexity of the milk movement system a considerable number of creameries, not confined to the south-west, may have received such milk. No unacceptable levels of lead have been found in bulk milk supplies.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the reasons for the death of cows that ate cattle feed contaminated with lead.

Mr. Gummer: In the case of carcases examined by the veterinary investigation service from farms where feed contaminated with lead has been fed, the clinical history, signs, post-mortem and laboratory findings were consistent with a diagnosis of lead poisoning.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish the results of the testing for the lead content of *(a)* milk and *(b)* meat from the farms where cows were fed lead contaminated feed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The results of sample analyses are being published as soon as they become available. Up to 12 November 1989, 1,168 sample results have been published.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to dispose of the dried milk which came from the herds suspected of being fed with lead contaminated feed.

Mr. Gummer: All suspect milk has been isolated, processed and withheld from sale. I will decide on the disposal of these milk products in the light of the results of analysis.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the number of farms in each county which are suspected of having received lead contaminated cattle feed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: A consolidated list of all farms which are currently under restriction appears in the schedule to the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Contamination of Feeding Stuffs) (England) (No. 2) Order 1989, copies of which are in the Library of the House.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to ensure that farmers no longer give lead-contaminated feed to their cattle; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: My officials have taken steps to trace and inform all recipients of potentially contaminated feed and are supervising the withdrawal of supplies from the farms concerned.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what measures he has taken to ensure that animal feeding stuffs imported into the United Kingdom are not contaminated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Feedingstuff Regulations 1988 require that animal feeds on sale or being held for sale should not be harmful to the animal or the final consumer. This applies to imported and home-produced feeding-stuffs. The regulations permit certain feed additives and limit the levels of specified contaminants in accordance with EC directives.

Goats

Mr. David Steel: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if the Government propose to revise the set-aside scheme so as to accommodate fibre-producing animals such as cashmere and angora goats.

Mr. Curry: The Government have decided not to take up the option under the Community set-aside scheme to introduce grazed fallow because of problems of control and possible adverse effects upon existing livestock producers, particularly in the hills. The Community rules do not permit restriction of the option to particular types of animals such as fibre-producing goats.

Set-aside Scheme

Mr. Wray: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he plans to extend the set-aside scheme to farmers willing to apply organic methods.

Mr. Maclean: The scheme already caters for this. Set-aside land may be put to fallow, either for the full set-aside period or in rotation with cropping. There is, thus, the opportunity for farmers intending to adopt organic methods to take land out of intensive agricultural production and to clear it of residues before organic production commences.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Butler: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has on the vertical transmission of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: There is no evidence to indicate that BSE can be transmitted vertically.

TRANSPORT

Lake Lothing (Crossing)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will put out to public consultation the proposed route for the second crossing of Lake Lothing by the A12 at Lowestoft before the end of 1989.

Mr. Atkins: We are considering a recent report from our consultations on the options for a second A12 trunk road crossing of Lake Lothing at Lowestoft. We hope to make an announcement about this scheme before the end of 1989.

Jubilee Line

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the current estimated costs of extending the Jubilee line to *(a)* Woolwich and *(b)* Thamesmead.

Mr. Portillo: It has been estimated that it would cost about £285 million in today's prices to add a branch to Woolwich to the proposed extension of the Jubilee line to Canary Wharf and Stratford. Extending such a branch beyond Woolwich to Thamesmead would cost about a further £135 million in today's prices.

Rail Tunnel, Woolwich

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the latest estimated cost of building a rail tunnel at Woolwich linking the north Kent and north Woolwich lines.

Mr. Portillo: A rail tunnel to link the north Kent and north Woolwich rail line is one of the options being considered by consultants working on the south circular assessment study. The results of the consultants' work will be published in December.

Roll-on Roll-off Vessels

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research is being undertaken into measures to prevent the loss of roll-on roll-off vessels at sea.

Mr. McLoughlin: Following the official report of the formal investigation into the loss of the Herald of Free Enterprise, the Department of Transport initiated a wide-ranging programme of research into ways of increasing the safety of ro-ro passenger ferries. Phase I of this unusually complex and important programme is nearing completion. I hope that the steering committee which has been supervising progress will have assessed the results and reported to me by early in the new year.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the answer of 2 November, *Official Report*, column *271*, how many *(a)* passenger and *(b)* freight roll-on roll-off vessels were lost at sea between 1 January 1981 and 31 December 1988.

Mr. McLoughlin: The figures available for total losses of roll-on roll-off vessels worldwide do not distinguish between passenger and freight vessels, and an answer could therefore be provided only at disproportionate cost. For the United Kingdom, only one such vessel was totally lost at sea in the period and she was a passenger vessel.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research is being undertaken into the causes of the loss of 23 roll-on roll-off vessels at sea between 1 January 1981 and 31 December 1988.

Mr. McLoughlin: The only United Kingdom vessel concerned was the Herald of Free Enterprise. Research which was carried out as part of the investigation into the loss of that ship is reported in appendix IV to the report of the formal investigation (report of court number 8074, published by HMSO) which is available in the Library.

Investigations into the other losses were the responsibility of the various flag states. In general, the detail of research carried out as part of the investigations is not published, but a resumé of the findings of investigations are provided to the International Maritime Organisation. These findings are valuable to the organisation and its member states in the revision and development of safety standards for roll-on roll-off ships.

Smoke Hoods

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will ask the Civil Aviation Authority to review its conclusions of its paper 87017 "Smoke Hoods: Net Safety Benefit Analysis", published in November 1987.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Civil Aviation Authority has the statutory responsibility for the regulation of safety in civil aviation. I know of no reason to ask the CAA to review its conclusions of its paper 87107. If the hon. Member has specific points which require clarification they should be taken up with the CAA. I have drawn the hon. Member's question to the attention of the chairman of the CAA.

Welsh Rail Network

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he plans to have with the chairman of British Rail concerning the expansion of the rail network in Wales.

Mr. Portillo: None, but I understand that British Rail is discussing with local authorities in south Wales the introduction of new passenger services.

Severn Crossing

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current estimate of the cost of the second Severn crossing.

Mr. Atkins: Responses were received on 2 October from the four consortia invited to tender for the construction of the second Severn crossing. These are now being considered. At this stage details of costs must remain confidential.

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current expected date of completion of the second Severn crossing.

Mr. Atkins: No date has yet been decided, but if all goes well the crossing could be completed by the end of 1995.

Channel Tunnel

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the joint venture agreement for Channel tunnel rail services between British Rail and Eurorail, referred to in his answer to the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) of 3 November, *Official Report*, columns *346-47*.

Mr. Portillo: No. I do not intend to do so.

East London Assessment Study

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for a new link route between Tottenham Hale and Hackney Wick; if he will consult the London borough of Waltham Forest about it; if he will make it his policy to hold a public inquiry before any decision on the route is taken; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the right hon. Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Sir B. Hayhoe) on 23 October at column *373*. It is too soon to say what the outcome will be, or if there will be any effect on the London borough of Waltham Forest. Any schemes resulting from decisions taken on the assessment studies will be subject to the appropriate procedures, whether for roads or public transport.

Bus Routes (London)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure that London Regional Transport is discharging its duties to consult London borough councils over changes to bus routes.

Mr. Portillo: Where London Regional Transport proposes to vary an existing bus service it is required by the Transport Act 1985 to consult the local authorities affected as well as the police, the London regional passengers committee and any other person it thinks fit. I have no evidence of LRT failing to comply with this requirement.

Travel Concessions

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards maintaining the current pattern of travel concessions to pensioners in Greater London, other than any variants of time limits not exceeding half an hour.

Mr. Portillo: Travel concessions organised by London Regional Transport are a matter for the London boroughs and the City of London which fund the scheme. If they do not agree on a uniform voluntary scheme by 1 January in any year, the London Regional Transport Act 1984 provides for automatic implementation of a reserve scheme for the ensuing financial year which guarantees free travel for elderly, blind and disabled London residents on all LRT services.

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: I have no plans at present to add to the number of offices the Department already occupies in the north-west of England.

Air Misses

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many air misses have been reported by air traffic controllers in each of the last six months.

Mr. McLoughlin: By international definition an air miss is a pilot report. With effect from 1 April 1989 the Civil Aviation Authority introduced a similar scheme to permit air traffic control personnel to report aircraft proximity hazards (APHAZ reports). The reports are at present investigated by the CAA's safety regulation group. It is expected that an independent APHAZ assessment panel will be established and functioning before the end of the year.

The number of reports received since the inception of the scheme are as follows:

	Number
April	11
May	9
June	18
July	10
August	9
September	6
October	13
Total	76

To date, investigation and action has been completed on 33 of the reports.

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the official figures for air misses involving civil and military aircraft for each of the last five years; and what proportion these figures represent of the total actual air misses.

Mr. McLoughlin: The figures produced by the joint airmiss working group are as follows:

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total
(a) All risk bearing airmisses	78	66	71	78	92	385
(b) Those involving both a commercial air transport and a military aircraft[1]	6	4	3	5	5	23
(c) Proportion of (b) to (a) Percentage	8	6	4	6	5	6

[1] 'Commercial air transport' means aircraft carrying fare paying passengers.

Institute of Aviation Medicine

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many incidents have been referred, under the CHIRP system, to the Institute of Aviation Medicine at Farnborough for each month since the inception of CHIRP.

Mr. McLoughlin: The information is not available in the form requested. The scheme for flight crew started in December 1982 and since then 1,139 reports have been received. The scheme was extended to air traffic control personnel in August 1986 and since then 222 reports have been received.

Transatlantic Flights

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the total number of licences issued to airlines to operate transatlantic flights which are currently not being used, each airline concerned, the number of licences held, and the airports involved.

Mr. McLoughlin: This is a matter for the Civil Aviation Authority. I will draw the hon. Member's question to the attention of the authority's chairman.

Landing Charges

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the landing charges rates for each type of aircraft operating scheduled air services out of each of the BAA-owned airports and for Manchester airport.

Mr. McLoughlin: The Department receives copies of the information on landing charges published annually by BAA plc, and by Manchester Airport plc. The hon. Member may wish to seek details from the airport companies.

Channel Tunnel (Freight Links)

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive British Rail's assessment of the costs and feasibility of providing a dedicated rail system for transporting freight directly from the Channel tunnel to the North of England; and whether any other studies of this matter have been or are being undertaken.

Mr. Portillo: British Rail will be setting out its proposals in the plan which it will shortly be publishing in compliance with section 40 of the Channel Tunnel Act 1987.

Tolls

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the roads, bridges or tunnels in England and Wales where tolls have to be paid.

Mr. Atkins: There are more than 50 tolled roads, bridges and tunnels in England. The major tolled estuarial crossings, owned by the Department or the relevant local authorities, are:

Severn Bridge
Dartford Tunnels
Humber Bridge
Mersey Tunnels
Tyne Tunnel
Itchen Bridge
Tamar Bridge

The smaller undertakings are mostly privately owned. These include:

Selby Bridge (North Yorkshire)
Aldwark Bridge (North Yorkshire)
Clifton Suspension Bridge (Bristol)
Dunham Bridge (near Lincoln)
Kingsland Bridge and toll road (Shrewsbury)
Shard Bridge (Lancashire)
Swinford Bridge (Oxfordshire)
Whitchurch Bridge (near Reading)
Whitney on Wye Bridge (Hereford and Worcester)

Roads, bridges and tunnels in Wales are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Potholes

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will update the regulations concerning work undertaken by utility companies on roads and footpaths in accordance with the recommendations of the Horne report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: Much useful progress has been made in following up the recommendations of the report, including drawing up and consulting on proposals for legislation. A Bill will be introduced as soon as a suitable opportunity can be found.

A19 (Safety)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the number of accidents, serious injuries and deaths on the section of A19 from Peterlee to Sunderland, over the last two years, giving the location of such accidents.

Mr. Atkins: The accident information requested, in order of occurrence, is as follows:

A19 (TR) Durham—From County Boundary Sunderland to Passfield Way Peterlee
Injury accidents 1 January 1987—31 December 1988

Reference Number	Date	Location of Accident	Map Reference	Accidents			Casualties			Total
				Fatal	Serious	Slight	Fatal	Serious	Slight	
17	9 February 1987	A19 Northbound carriage way at Passfield Way junction	4112 3959	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
18	15 February 1987	A19 Slip road at South junction to B1404 Seaton, Seaham	4007 5012	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
33	15 March 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway exit slip road from Hawthorn services	4125 4549	—	—	×	—	—	4	4
34	27 March 1987	A19 Southbound slip road from B1432	4074 4716	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
19	23 February 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway North of Murton footbridge	4064 4775	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
32	30 March 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway junction with Passfield Way Peterlee	4112 3959	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
44	5 April 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway junction with Passfield Way Peterlee	4112 3959	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
45	6 April 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway near Easington Village	4073 4342	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
46	6 April 1987	A19 Northbound carriageway approx. ¼ mile South of Easington	4120 4532	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
47	6 April 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway adjacent to Hawthorn Services	4125 4549	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
48	6 April 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway adjacent to Hawthorn Services	4125 4549	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
50	6 April 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway adjacent to Hawthorn Services	4125 4549	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
70	12 May 1987	A19 Northbound carriageway ½ mile South of Hawthorn Services	4106 4496	—	×	—	—	1	—	1
83	1 June 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway adjacent to Hawthorn Services	4125 4549	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
82	20 June 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway at Passfield Way junction	4112 3959	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
84	24 June 1987	A19 1 mile North of Murton	4060 4794	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
107	7 August 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway approach to Lowhills roundabout	4140 4120	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
109	19 August 1987	A19/B1404 Northbound near to Northbound entry slip road	4004 5015	—	—	×	—	—	3	3
108	26 August 1987	A19 Northbound carriageway Near Mill Hill Peterlee	4132 4258	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
127	1 September 1987	A19 ½ mile South of Hawthorn Services Northbound carriageway	4106 4496	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
128	15 September 1987	A19 Northbound exit slip road Murton Flyover	4080 4699	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
152	12 November 1987	A19 Northbound carriageway ¾ mile South of Hawthorn Services	4115 4519	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
155	26 November 1987	A19 Burnhope Way entrance to Lowhills roundabout Peterlee	4140 4120	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
(TW) 77	27 November 1987	A19 Southbound carriageway ½ mile North of junction to Seaham Vc	3940 5070	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
2	1 January 1988	A19 Lowhills roundabout Peterlee	4140 4120	—	—	×	—	—	3	3
3	4 January 1988	A19 Northbound carriageway Loaning Burn Easington	4069 4356	×	—	—	1	4	1	6
4	5 January 1988	A19 Southbound carriageway South of Easington	4132 4278	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
8	5 January 1988	A19 Northbound carriageway approximately 200 yds South of B1285	4079 4705	×	—	—	2	—	—	2
9	11 January 1988	A19 Northbound carriageway 300 yds South of Westlane Bridge	4115 4155	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
5	12 January 1988	A19 Northbound carriageway North of Easington entry slip road	4068 4362	—	—	×	—	—	3	3
10	18 January 1988	A19 Northbound slip road at junction B1404 Seaham	4005 5010	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
24	8 February 1988	A19 Southbound carriageway 1 mile South of Hawthorne Services	4094 4452	—	×	—	—	1	—	1
27	24 February 1988	A19 junction slip to A1018 Seaham	4019 4953	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
62	30 May 1988	A19 entrance to Hawthorne Services Northbound carriageway	4125 4549	—	×	—	—	1	—	1
100	17 June 1988	A19 Southbound carriageway ½ mile South of Hawthorn Services	4105 4498	—	×	—	—	1	—	1
98	17 August 1988	A19 Southbound carriageway junction with Passfield Way	4114 3959	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
131	2 November 1988	A19 Lowhills Roundabout Peterlee	4140 4120	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
130	18 November 1988	A19 Northbound carriageway 100 yds South of Hawthorne Services	4121 4540	—	—	×	—	—	1	1
115	10 December 1988	A19 ¼ mile North of B1404 between Seaton and Burdon	3950 5070	—	—	×	—	—	1	1

Reference Number	Date	Location of Accident	Map Reference	Accidents			Casualties			Total
				Fatal	Serious	Slight	Fatal	Serious	Slight	
145	18 December 1988	A19 junction with Passfield Way Peterlee	4112 3960	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
146	21 December 1988	A19 Northbound carriageway junction with Passfield Way	4114 3959	—	—	×	—	—	2	2
				2	4	35	3	8	53	64
				Total 41						

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Medical Schools

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many medical schools in England and Wales have a department of rehabilitation medicine in their medical faculty; and how many medically qualified staff are employed in each.

Mr. Jackson: Four, of which one has seven medically qualified members of staff and the remainder three each.

Further Education

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many local education authorities had submitted schemes of delegation for further education to his Department for approval by the required date of 30 September 1989.

Mr. Jackson: Of the 95 local education authorities required to submit schemes of planning and delegation for further education to my Department by 30 September 1989, all but one have now done so.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) in the submitted articles of government for further education colleges, how many local education authority schemes of delegation propose the inclusion of representation by special needs staff on the academic board;

(2) in the submitted schemes of delegation for further education *(a)* where reference is made to procedures of planning, how many of them make reference to the procedures they intend to use for planning for the needs of young people with special education needs, *(b)* how many schemes of delegation establish special educational needs as a specific programme area for resourcing purposes in respect of course provision for groups of students with special educational needs, *(c)* where a specific programme area is established for SEN, what weighting is given to it, *(d)* how many LEAs have followed the recommendation under item 23 of circular 9/88 to establish a development fund for the development of provision for students with SEN and *(e)* how many LEAs have included among their expected items of expenditure a central fund for meeting the costs of individual students with SEN, as recommended under item 27 of circular 9/88;

(3) what criteria his Department is employing in determining whether to approve the schemes of delegation submitted by local education authorities, with regard to the provision of services to students with special educational needs.

Mr. Jackson: The Department is currently considering schemes of planning and delegation for further education submitted for approval by LEAs other than inner London. In considering schemes for approval, my right hon. Friend will want to assure himself that all LEAs intend to take account, in planning their further and higher education provision, of the need to secure an appropriate range of education and training opportunities for those who have special educational needs. The information requested on the schemes submitted could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

St. John's Angell School, Brixton

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what communications he has received from St. John's Angell Church of England primary school in Brixton about staffing; and what reply he has sent.

Mrs. Rumbold: A letter on this subject from the acting head teacher of St. John's Angell Town primary school was received on 2 November. It will be replied to as soon as possible.

School Leavers

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of the total number of students eligible to leave school at age 16 years in the summers of 1988 and 1989 *(a)* joined a 6th form course, *(b)* became employed full time, *(c)* joined YTS as an employee, *(d)* joined YTS as a trainee, *(e)* became employed part-time, and *(f)* entered further education.

Mr. Jackson: In January 1989, the latest date for which figures are available, provisional estimates of students aged 16 at 31 August 1988 in England, were as follows:

Percentage of the age group in full-time education

	Number
School[1]	33
Further/higher education[2]	17
All	50
YTS[3]	23
In employment[4]	27

[1] Pupils attending maintained, independent and special schools are included.

[2] Full-time and sandwich including higher education but excluding private further education. Excludes those on YTS within college.

[3] Includes those in further educational establishments attending YTS courses.

[4] Including those who were neither employed nor seeking work (eg. because of domestic responsibilities).

Education Spending (Northumberland)

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what resources have been provided in Northumberland in connection with the implementation of the national curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: Targeted support for expenditure by local education authorities on the introduction of the national curriculum is channelled through education support grants and LEA training grants. This financial year the Government are supporting £801,100 of expenditure in Northumberland through these grants to help the authority's schools to implement the national curriculum. That is an addition to the general rate support grant (RSG) funding which local authorities receive in support of spending. It is for Northumberland itself to determine how much in total to allocate to the implementation of the education reforms, including the national curriculum.

Student Loans

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the number of letters received by his Department expressing *(a)* support and *(b)* opposition to the introduction of student loans; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Since the publication of the White Paper on top-up loans for students we have received about 4,100 letters. Many supported the principle that students should contribute to their own living costs.

College Accommodation

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what action he is taking to assist Bradford and Ilkley community college secure additional accommodation following the withdrawal of the college from the Alexandra hotel; and if he will make extra funds immediately available to the college to secure additional accommodation for lectures and students;

(2) what regulations exist governing the minimum standards of teaching accommodation at colleges; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what reports he has received from problems caused by a shortage of teaching accommodation at the Bradford campus of Bradford and Ilkley community college; if he will arrange for an official inspection immediately of the teaching facilities at the Bradford campus; if he will make a statement;

(4) what representations he has received from students from the Bradford campus of Bradford and Ilkley community college about the lack of lecture rooms and seating; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has not received any reports or representations this year about the teaching accommodation at the Bradford campus of the Bradford and Ilkley community college. However, the Department has received a bid from the Bradford education authority for a major building project, to start in 1990, to replace the Alexandra hotel building. The bid will be considered on its merits along with those from other education authorities, and allocations will be announced in December.

There are no regulations regarding minimum standards of teaching accommodation for further and higher education (FHE) colleges. However, the Department publishes advice about the capacity of FHE institutions; such advice can be found in design notes 33, 37, 44 and 45. I am sending the hon. Member copies of all these publications.

Her Majesty's inspectorate make regular visits to FHE colleges which include assessments of the adequacy and sufficiency of teaching and other accommodation.

Nursing Courses

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if students undertaking nursing undergraduate courses in full-time higher education are to have their grants frozen and replaced with loans under the proposed student loans scheme.

Mr. Jackson: Students on nursing degree courses, like other students in full-time higher education, will have access to the additional resource provided by the top-up loan.

Graduates

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what is the average income level received 12 months after graduation by *(a)* disabled graduates, *(b)* able-bodied graduates and *(c)* all graduates;

(2) what is the average length of time taken to enter full-time employment following graduation for *(a)* disabled graduates, *(b)* able-bodied graduates and *(c)* all graduates.

Mr. Jackson: The information is not collected centrally.

Class Sizes

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the latest figures for the average class sizes in *(a)* primary schools, *(b)* secondary schools and *(c)* nursery schools for each local education authority in England.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Information on average class sizes for nursery schools is not available centrally. The average class size for maintained primary and secondary schools in each local education authority in England in January 1989 is given in the table. Class sizes relate to those taught by one teacher during a selected period on the day of the census count in January. They do not necessarily represent the pattern of classes over the academic year as a whole.

Average class sizes in maintained Primary and Secondary schools January 1989

	Average class size	
	Primary	*Secondary*
Barking	24·3	18·7
Barnet	24·2	18·6
Bexley	25·4	20·3
Brent	25·1	19·0
Bromley	25·9	19·6
Croydon	25·5	20·5
Ealing	23·9	18·1
Enfield	26·3	19·5
Haringey	24·3	18·4
Harrow	26·8	21·5
Havering	26·1	19·4
Hillingdon	25·3	19·7
Hounslow	24·8	19·2
Kingston upon Thames	26·7	18·1
Merton	26·2	20·1
Newham	25·5	20·5
Redbridge	28·6	19·9
Richmond upon Thames	25·1	20·6
Sutton	26·3	20·0
Waltham Forest	26·4	17·9

	Average class size	
	Primary	Secondary
Inner London	23·5	20·2
Birmingham	27·4	21·4
Coventry	26·1	20·7
Dudley	25·9	19·1
Sandwell	26·1	18·6
Solihull	26·3	20·3
Walsall	24·2	18·3
Wolverhampton	22·9	19·0
Knowsley	25·3	19·1
Liverpool	24·4	19·0
St. Helens	26·2	18·4
Sefton	26·3	20·5
Wirral	24·5	19·9
Bolton	26·6	19·4
Bury	25·8	19·8
Manchester	25·5	18·8
Oldham	26·9	19·6
Rochdale	26·8	18·5
Salford	25·2	18·4
Stockport	26·3	19·4
Tameside	26·7	20·3
Trafford	26·4	19·0
Wigan	26·3	18·7
Barnsley	25·5	19·9
Doncaster	24·9	20·1
Rotherham	24·5	19·0
Sheffield	24·6	19·3
Bradford	25·0	20·7
Calderdale	26·7	19·6
Kirklees	25·7	19·4
Leeds	25·5	19·3
Wakefield	26·2	19·5
Gateshead	23·7	18·7
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	25·7	19·1
North Tyneside	23·2	18·5
South Tyneside	23·6	17·9
Sunderland	24·8	19·6
Isles of Scilly	14·0	12·2
Avon	27·2	20·6
Bedfordshire	25·8	20·9
Berkshire	26·5	19·3
Buckinghamshire	27·7	20·4
Cambridgeshire	26·7	20·4
Cheshire	27·7	19·9
Cleveland	25·5	18·9
Cornwall	26·1	20·2
Cumbria	24·4	19·0
Derbyshire	25·4	19·5
Devon	26·0	21·3
Dorset	26·8	20·8
Durham	26·0	20·1
East Sussex	25·9	20·2
Essex	26·0	20·8
Gloucestershire	25·7	19·7
Hampshire	26·0	20·4
Hereford and Worcester	25·7	20·1
Hertfordshire	25·0	19·0
Humberside	25·5	20·0
Lancashire	27·2	20·0
Leicestershire	25·5	19·8
Lincolnshire	25·9	20·2
Norfolk	24·9	19·6
North Yorkshire	24·6	19·7
Northamptonshire	26·2	20·1
Northumberland	25·3	20·3
Nottinghamshire	25·3	19·1
Oxfordshire	26·0	20·7
Shropshire	24·6	19·3
Somerset	26·3	21·0
Staffordshire	25·5	20·4
Suffolk	24·8	21·0
Surrey	24·5	19·0
Warwickshire	25·5	19·5
West Sussex	25·9	20·6
Wiltshire	25·5	20·2
England	25·7	19·9

Under-fives

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what are the latest figures for the percentage of under-fives in nursery schools, by local education authority in England in rank order;

(2) what are the latest figures for the percentage of under-fives in nursery classes, by local education authority in England, in rank order;

(3) what are the latest figures for the percentage of under-fives in infant classes, by local education authority in England, in rank order.

Mrs. Rumbold: The percentage of children under five attending maintained nursery schools, nursery classes and infant classes in primary schools in each local education authority in England in January 1989 in rank order is given in the following tables.

Percentage of children under five attending nursery schools in each local education authority in January 1989 in rank order

	Percentage of population
South Tyneside	18·7
Durham	17·0
Rochdale	14·9
Salford	14·4
Newham	13·2
Wolverhampton	12·4
Sunderland	11·8
Walsall	11·3
Stockport	10·9
Berkshire	9·6
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	9·6
Lancashire	9·2
Bedfordshire	8·6
Birmingham	7·9
Kingston-upon-Thames	7·7
Staffordshire	7·3
Inner London	7·0
Cumbria	6·9
Barnet	6·9
Ealing	6·8
Hertfordshire	6·6
Warwickshire	6·5
Bolton	6·5
Avon	6·4
North Tyneside	6·1
Sheffield	6·1
Wakefield	5·9
Kirklees	5·9
Sutton	5·9
Tameside	5·7
Derbyshire	5·6
Coventry	5·3
Rotherham	5·2
Waltham Forest	5·2
Oxfordshire	5·2
Croydon	4·9
Sefton	4·5
Liverpool	4·5

	Percentage of population
Humberside	4·5
Manchester	4·2
Northamptonshire	4·1
Dudley	4·1
Cambridgeshire	4·1
Brent	3·7
Bury	3·7
Bradford	3·6
Cheshire	3·5
Haringey	3·3
Wirral	3·3
Bexley	3·2
Barnsley	3·2
West Sussex	3·0
Buckinghamshire	3·0
Sandwell	2·6
Norfolk	2·4
Nottinghamshire	2·4
Lincolnshire	2·3
North Yorkshire	2·2
Wigan	2·1
East Sussex	2·1
Northumberland	2·0
Hillingdon	2·0
Richmond upon Thames	1·9
Surrey	1·8
Shropshire	1·7
St. Helens	1·6
Gateshead	1·3
Leeds	1·3
Devon	1·1
Cleveland	1·0
Cornwall[1]	1·0
Hampshire	0·7
Essex	0·7
Suffolk	0·6
Kent	0·2
Leicestershire	0·2
Calderdale[2]	0·0
Solihull[2]	0·0
Redbridge[2]	0·0
Hereford and Worcester[2]	0·0
Somerset[2]	0·0
Dorset[2]	0·0
Merton[2]	0·0
Doncaster[2]	0·0
Hounslow[2]	0·0
Oldham[2]	0·0
Havering[2]	0·0
Isle of Wight[2]	0·0
Harrow[2]	0·0
Barking[2]	0·0
Enfield[2]	0·0
Knowsley[2]	0·0
Trafford[2]	0·0
Gloucestershire[2]	0·0
Wiltshire[2]	0·0
Bromley[2]	0·0
ENGLAND	4·2

[1] Includes Isles of Scilly.
[2] Have no Nursery Schools.

Percentage of children under five attending nursery classes in each local education authority in January 1989 in rank order

	Percentage of population
Hounslow	66·4
Cleveland	54·3
Manchester	51·7
Walsall	48·9
North Tyneside	48·4
Barnsley	46·6
Nottinghamshire	46·3
Wolverhampton	46·1
Hillingdon	45·9
Liverpool	45·5
Newham	43·6
Sandwell	43·4
Wakefield	42·6
Knowsley	41·7
Doncaster	40·6
Merton	40·1
Salford	38·8
Leeds	36·5
Sheffield	36·3
Tameside	35·8
Rotherham	35·4
Oldham	34·5
Gateshead	34·1
Haringey	33·7
Bradford	33·4
Barking	33·3
Kirklees	33·0
Waltham Forest	32·4
South Tyneside	32·3
Solihull	31·9
St. Helens	31·7
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	31·1
Bolton	30·7
Inner London	30·2
Humberside	29·8
Ealing	29·6
Dudley	29·6
Brent	28·7
Calderdale	28·5
Derbyshire	28·5
Sefton	26·7
Northumberland	26·0
Birmingham	24·5
Sunderland	24·2
Barnet	24·2
Bury	24·0
Wigan	23·9
Hertfordshire	23·7
Bedfordshire	22·8
Durham	22·7
Leicestershire	21·8
Kingston upon Thames	20·9
Enfield	20·6
Trafford	19·6
Richmond upon Thames	19·0
Sutton	18·6
Coventry	18·4
Wirral	18·1
Cheshire	17·9
North Yorkshire	17·2
Harrow	16·3
Northamptonshire	16·0
Staffordshire	15·3
Suffolk	15·0
Rochdale	15·0
Cumbria	14·9
Berkshire	14·6
Cornwall[1]	13·7
Bexley	12·1
Redbridge	11·7
Warwickshire	11·2
Shropshire	10·8
Surrey	9·7
Devon	9·6
Avon	9·4
Oxfordshire	9·3
Cambridgeshire	8·3
Lancashire	8·0
Buckinghamshire	7·4
Hereford and Worcester	6·4
Isle of Wight	5·9
Dorset	5·9
Lincolnshire	5·8
Stockport	5·5
Essex	5·5

	Percentage of population
East Sussex	5·4
Kent	4·8
Havering	4·3
Hampshire	4·3
Norfolk	2·6
Wiltshire	2·2
Croydon	2·2
Bromley	2·0
Somerset	0·9
West Sussex	0·6
Gloucestershire[2]	—
England	20·5

[1] Includes Isles of Scilly.
[2] Has no designated nursery classes.

Percentage of children under five in attending infant classes in each local education authority in January 1989 in rank order

	Percentage of population
Isle of Wight	36·6
Gateshead	34·2
Northamptonshire	34·1
Liverpool	33·9
Calderdale	33·7
Havering	33·2
Cumbria	33·2
Somerset	33·1
Solihull	33·1
North Tyneside	32·8
Tameside	32·6
Sefton	32·6
Barking	32·5
Walsall	32·4
Doncaster	32·4
Wigan	32·3
Cheshire	32·3
South Tyneside	32·1
Bury	32·1
Oldham	32·0
Warwickshire	32·0
Lancashire	31·8
Salford	31·8
Birmingham	31·7
Gloucestershire	31·6
St. Helens	31·6
Stockport	31·5
Sandwell	31·5
Coventry	31·4
Avon	31·2
Cambridgeshire	31·1
Sunderland	31·0
Dorset	31·0
Cornwall[1]	30·8
Northumberland	30·6
Durham	30·4
Bolton	30·3
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	30·1
Wirral	30·0
East Sussex	29·9
Rochdale	29·6
Harrow	29·5
Enfield	29·2
Knowsley	29·0
Croydon	27·7
Kingston upon Thames	26·9
Brent	26·7
Ealing	26·4
North Yorkshire	26·2
Haringey	26·2
Norfolk	25·7
Barnet	25·5
Derbyshire	23·2
Lincolnshire	22·7
Staffordshire	22·0
Leeds	22·0
Wakefield	21·3
Shropshire	21·1
Humberside	20·6
Merton	20·4
Bradford	19·8
Kirklees	19·7
Richmond upon Thames	19·6
Cleveland	19·1
Sheffield	18·9
Barnsley	17·6
Hertfordshire	17·2
Wiltshire	16·2
Manchester	15·8
Wolverhampton	15·8
Devon	15·7
Essex	15·6
Leicestershire	15·3
Suffolk	15·2
Hampshire	15·0
Redbridge	14·9
Rotherham	14·9
Bromley	14·3
Dudley	14·0
Inner London	12·8
Surrey	12·1
Bexley	11·5
Waltham Forest	11·5
Hereford and Worcester	9·7
Trafford	8·1
Kent	8·0
Buckinghamshire	7·9
Nottinghamshire	6·7
West Sussex	5·4
Bedfordshire	5·0
Oxfordshire	3·8
Hillingdon	3·6
Berkshire	1·2
Hounslow	1·0
Sutton	0·6
Newham	0·0
England	21·1

[1] Includes Isles of Scilly.

Disabled Students

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any evidence from other countries where a loans system has been introduced of its effects on disabled students entering further and higher education.

Mr. Jackson: We have no evidence to suggest that the introduction of loans schemes in other countries has reduced participation by disabled students. Top-up loans represent an additional resource which we intend to make available to disabled as to other students.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether as part of his proposals on top-up loans for students he will consider establishing a fourth access fund to assist disabled students.

Mr. Jackson: Disabled students, in addition to their present support, will be eligible for the additional resources in the form of the loan that the Government intend to provide. Unlike other students, they will retain entitlement to social security benefits. They will be eligible for support from the access fund appropriate to their level of study. In the circumstances there is no need to provide an additional access fund exclusively for disabled students.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many local education authorities have policies governing payment of the disabled students allowance.

Mr. Jackson: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 6 November 1989 at column *423*.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether there are any national guidelines issued to local education authorities governing payment of the disabled students allowance.

Mr. Jackson: The Department issues notes of guidance to local education authorities on the interpretation and application of most aspects of the mandatory awards regulations, including those relating to disabled students. Copies are in the Library.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations his Department has received in 1989 relating to the level of the disabled students grant.

Mr. Jackson: Some formal responses to the White Paper "Top-up Loans for Students" expressed concern about the effect of those proposals on the supplementary allowances which are available with the grant for disabled students. The RNID, responding on behalf of a number of organisations representing the disabled, argued for additional funding, over and above the allowance for disabled students.

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what research his Department has carried out or supported to ascertain the extra costs arising from disability faced by disabled students who attend higher education courses.

Mr. Jackson: The student grant rates are reviewed each year in the light of available information about students' circumstances. This comes from a variety of sources, including the series of surveys commissioned by the Department of the income and expenditure of a representative sample of students.

ENERGY

Electricity Privatisation

4. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most recent estimate for the total cost of publicising the new electricity companies and privatising the electricity supply industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No expenditure on publicising the new electricity companies has so far been incurred by Government. Expenditure by the industry is a matter for the industry itself. The total costs which will be incurred in the privatisation of the electricity supply industry will depend upon many factors that have not yet been decided.

22. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most recent estimate of slippage in the timetable for the privatisation of the electricity supply industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: There has been no slippage in the overall timetable for the privatisation. We still intend to complete it within this Parliament.

48. **Mr. Rost:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what progress has been made in the setting up of independent generation companies after the restructuring of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) earlier today.

52. **Mr. Bright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when the privatisation of the electricity industry is now expected to take place.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The electricity industry will be privatised within this Parliament; the area boards will be offered for sale in autumn 1990 and the two generating companies will be offered for sale in the first half of 1991. Exact dates will be set nearer the time.

53. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he intends to remove the advanced gas-cooled reactors from the electricity privatisation.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend's statement on 9 November at column 1175.

75. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether the recently agreed package of measures between the Department and the electricity industry are intended to lead to increased competition after the privatisation of the electricity industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The contractual package announced at the end of September is designed to provide a stable transition to full competition in electricity generation and supply.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the most recent estimated date for vesting day for each part of the electricity supply industry, and for the flotation of each, respectively.

Mr. Wakeham: The Government intend to implement the new structure of the industry at the end of March 1990; the area boards will be offered for sale in autumn 1990 and the two generating companies will be offered for sale in the first half of 1991. Exact dates will be set nearer the time.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the total amount spent by his Department to date on outside advice on the privatisation of electricty; and which companies have received £1 million or more.

Mr. Wakeham: The total cost to my Department of all advisers working on electricity privatisation amounted to £0·8 million in 1987-88 and £5·5 million in 1988-89. In addition, there is provision of £26·5 million relevant expenses in 1989-90. Detailed information about contracts with advisers is commercially confidential.

Fossil Fuels

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the total consumption in metric tonnes of oil, gas and coal, respectively, in 1973 and each succeeding year.

Mr. Wakeham: Total inland consumption has been as follows:

million tonnes

Calendar year	Oil	Gas (coal equivalent)	Coal
1973	108·2	44·2	133·3
1974	101·6	52·9	117·9
1975	89·9	55·4	122·2
1976	89·0	58·8	123·6
1977	90·0	62·8	124·0
1978	91·4	65·1	120·5
1979	91·3	71·1	129·4
1980	78·3	71·1	123·5
1981	72·7	72·1	118·4
1982	72·9	71·7	111·0
1983	70·4	74·8	111·5
1984	87·7	76·5	77·3
1985	76·2	82·3	105·4
1986	75·6	83·6	114·2
1987	73·7	85·9	115·9
1988	78·3	81·5	111·5

Source: Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics, Tables 2 (natural gas), 3 (oil) and 14 (coal)

British Coal

6. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the topics which he intends to raise when he next meets the chairman of British Coal.

Mr. Wakeham: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Illsley) earlier today.

23. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Wakeham: I meet the chairman of British Coal regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

47. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman of British Coal regularly to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

49. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much has been invested in British Coal since 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Over £6·5 billion of capital expenditure has been invested in British Coal since 1979. Investment is continuing at over £2 million every working day.

77. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he now expects to announce proposals for the privatisation of British Coal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The Government have announced their intention to privatise the coal industry in the next Parliament. The timing of privatisation will depend on, among other things, the industry's progress towards achieving a viable size and level of costs.

UK Continental Shelf

20. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the level of exploration and appraisal drilling in the United Kingdom continental shelf during 1989 and in earlier years.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The level of exploration and appraisal drilling so far this year compares favourably with that achieved in the two best previous years on record, 1984 and 1988. The numbers of wells started up to the end of October in each of these three years was as follows:

	Exploration	Appraisal	Total
1984	91	69	160
1988	77	74	151
1989	76	65	141

35. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the trend in the level of exploration and appraisal drilling in the United Kingdom continental shelf.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Up to the end of October, 76 exploration wells and 65 appraisal wells had been started on the United Kingdom continental shelf since the beginning of the year.

Gas Industry (Competition)

50. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has received any representations about competition in the gas industry.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have received a number of representations about competition in the gas industry.

19. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has met the Director General of Gas Supply to discuss the progress being made towards the competitive sale of gas to industry.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I met the Director General of Gas Supply last month and we discussed a range of issues of mutual interest, including competition in the supply of gas to industry.

Nuclear Power Stations

5. **Dr. Kim Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what studies he has undertaken into the cost of decommissioning Britain's nuclear power stations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Earlier this year my Department asked the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority to review the CEGB's estimates of decommissioning costs. In drawing up its accounts for 1988-89 the Central Electricity Generating Board will take account of both this work and its own further studies.

38. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to how many nuclear power stations have been *(a)* ordered, and *(b)* completed within Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries within the last five years.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In OECD countries during 1984-88, work was started on 19 new nuclear power reactors, and 92 reactors were connected to the grid.

45. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the amount of greenhouse gases that would be produced if all the United Kingdom's nuclear reactors were decommissioned and the replacement demand met entirely by the burning of fossil fuels.

70. **Mr. Hayes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate the amount of greenhouse gases that would be produced if all the United Kingdom's nuclear reactors were decommissioned and demand met entirely by the burning of fossil fuels.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Replacing nuclear power by electricity produced from fossil fuels would increase the output of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas produced by the electricity sector, by about 53 million tonnes per annum or 25 per cent. over current levels.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what percentage of the population and how many in actual numbers, live within 15 miles of a nuclear power station in *(a)* England, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 6 November 1989]:* The percentage and number of the population who live within 25 km (approximately 15·5 miles) of a nuclear power station, based on the 1981 census of population figures, are as follows:

	Per cent.	*Number*
England	7	3,292,000
Scotland	7	356,000
Wales	3	85,000

British Nuclear Fuels plc

7. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Nuclear Fuels; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Wakeham: I visited Sellafield on 11 October and took the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues with the chairman.

Energy Efficiency

14. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what progress is being made on promoting the efficient use of energy in the public sector.

55. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what progress is being made on promoting the efficient use of energy in the public sector.

Mr. Peter Morrison: On 19 October I chaired the first of a series of regular meetings of Ministers responsible for departmental energy use, when excellent progress was made.

63. **Mr. Squire:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has proposals to encourage the use of more energy-efficient domestic appliances.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Manufacturers and consumer associations already publish energy consumption data for electrical appliances which facilitate the choice of the more energy efficient models. My energy efficiency office has commissioned a study on the energy efficiency of electrical appliances and we will consider the matter further when we have received the report of this study.

68. **Mr. Hague:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what improvements have been made in energy efficiency in the last 10 years.

72. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what studies he has undertaken into the rate of improvement in energy efficiency in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The "Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 1989" contains figures for primary energy consumption, gross domestic product, and the resultant energy ratio.

Over the last 10 years, the energy ratio has improved from 1·24 tonnes of coal equivalent per £1,000 gross domestic product in 1979 to 1·01 tonnes per £1,000 in 1988, an average reduction in energy intensity in excess of 2 per cent. per year.

71. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what initiatives his Department is taking in the field of energy efficiency.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Wray) on 17 July 1989 at column *53*.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what evidence is available on the extent to which the seven highest energy-using industries have become more energy efficient during the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The latest information comes from the five-yearly purchase inquiries conducted with a sample of 10,000 United Kingdom manufacturing sites and establishments by the Business Statistics Office. A further survey is now under way.

The table shows the difference in energy consumption as a percentage of gross output for the seven most energy-intensive industries in the United Kingdom for the years 1979 and 1984. The figures are published in "Industrial Energy Markets: No. 9 Energy Efficiency Series".

	Gross output	*Percentage of output spent on Energy Consumption*	
	1984	*1979*	*1984*
	£ million		
Basic Chemicals	7,224	7·84	6·75
Iron and Steel	7,208	8·74	7·47
Non Ferrous Metals	3,965	4·90	[1]5·30
Cement	3,335	9·66	9·13
Paper and Board	1,942	11·88	9·59
Bricks and Ceramics	1,738	10·35	10·70
Glass	1,328	10·29	[2]11·32

[1] There has been a change to electric melting for quality control, environmental and other reasons leading to lower energy consumption but higher cost.

[2] During this five-year period manpower costs more than halved due to intense rationalisation of plants, and other costs were also reduced —thus masking a real decrease in energy consumption.

It can be seen that in several industries there have been considerable improvements in energy efficiency. A number of individual examples of considerable increases in energy efficiency in the tabulated industries are being documented under the Energy Efficiency Office "Best Practice" programme and will be available during the coming year.

Energy Conservation

15. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many households who are on low incomes have been insulated to conserve heat under the energy efficiency scheme since March; how many are budgeted for in the current financial year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Some 37,000 low-income households benefited from the insulation services of community insulation projects in the first quarter of this financial year. For the year as a whole I expect to see not less than 140,000 homes to benefit.

Global Warming

16. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about the contribution of the burning of fossil fuels to global warming.

56. **Mr. Charles Wardle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about the contribution of the burning of fossil fuels to the greenhouse effect and global warming.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I have received a number of representations on this matter. The Select Committee on Energy has published a report on the energy policy implications of the greenhouse effect, to which the Government responded on 8 November.

PWR Programme

17. **Dr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the Government's adviser on electricity privatisation regarding the cost and viability of the PWR programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: I meet my advisers on electricity privatisation frequently and discuss a wide range of issues; I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made to the House on 9 November.

58. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the cost of electricity which will be generated by the means of the pressurised water reactor as presently planned.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board. I shall ask the chairman of the CEGB to write to the hon. Member.

Electricity Generation

21. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman-designate of PowerGen; and what was discussed.

26. **Miss Hoey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Wakeham: I regularly meet the chairmen-designate of PowerGen and National Power to discuss matters of common interest.

36. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of National Power; and what matters were discussed.

42. **Mr. John P. Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board; and what matters were discussed.

46. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next expects to meet the chairman of National Power; and what matters will be discussed.

65. **Mr. Barron:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I regularly meet the chairman-designate of National Power to discuss matters of common interest.

44. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most recent estimate of the potential generation of electricity from renewable sources; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The most recent estimates of the potential contribution from renewable energy sources were published in Energy Paper 55 "Renewable Energy in the UK—The Way Forward", copies of which are in the Libraries of the House.

The Government intend to set orders for up to 600 MW of renewable energy capacity during the 1990s, in addition to whatever is contracted in the initial obligation. The proposed levels of these special tranches will be kept under review to ensure that when the obligations are made they take into account the potential availability of renewable capacity.

United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association.

24. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the representatives of the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association; and what was discussed.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met representatives of the United Kingdom Offshore Operators Association on 8 November, and a number of North sea-related issues were raised.

Severn Barrage

25. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about proposals for a tidal-power barrage across the Severn estuary.

30. **Mr. Cash:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about proposals for a tidal-power barrage across the Severn estuary.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met Sir Frank Gibb, chairman of the Severn Tidal Power Group on 18 October to discuss the general report of the Severn barrage project.

Over the next two years further work on the Severn barrage will be undertaken. This will include some site specific environmental work and a study of the organisation and financing issues for a barrage.

The work to be undertaken immediately is under discussion with the Severn Tidal Power Group in the light of its report.

Coal Industry (Employment)

27. **Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most recent estimate of the effect of the electricity supply industry on future employment in the British coal industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: The coal industry will need to ensure that its future output and prices meet the needs of its main

customers including the privatised electricity generators. Employment in the industry will depend both on demand for coal and future productivity gains. It is for British Coal to determine what its manpower requirements are and how it will meet them.

North Sea Development

28. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the present rate of North sea development.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Exploration and appraisal drilling remain close to record levels and expenditure on new developments continues to recover following the collapse in oil prices in 1986. These results demonstrate the success of the policies we have pursued to ensure that investment in the United Kingdom continental shelf is encouraged and will be maintained in the future.

29. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the latest estimates for expansion of exploration and development of oil and gas in the Scottish sector of the North sea.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I am confident that under this Government's policies the United Kingdom sector of the North sea will remain a substantial producer of oil and gas well into the next century. Exploration and appraisal activity remains close to record levels and expenditure on new developments continues to recover following the collapse of oil prices in 1986.

Electricity Imports

31. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what estimate he has of the proportion of electricity imported from France via the Channel cable which is nuclear generated; at what cost; and what estimate he has of the coal equivalent in 1989 to the latest available date.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Electricity imported from France via the cross-Channel link is at present dispatched from the French system as a whole and no differentiation is at present made of the source.

67. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the import of electricity from natural sources in Iceland.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am advised that there are no plans at present to import electricity from Iceland. Any decision to proceed with a link will be a commercial matter for the industry.

British Gas

32. **Mr. Robert Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Gas; and what issues he discussed.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend met the chairman of British Gas in September when they discussed a range of issues of mutual interest.

North Sea (Safety)

33. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what further proposals he has to improve safety in the North sea oil industry.

40. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to enforce higher safety standards in the North sea oil industry.

Mr. Peter Morrison: We are constantly seeking to improve offshore safety standards. Regulations requiring emergency shut-down valves on offshore installations were introduced in June 1989, as were regulations requiring the election of offshore safety representatives and safety committees. Regulations relating to revised arrangements for first aid offshore were made in September. Further regulations relating to sub-sea isolation systems are being prepared. Discussion documents have been issued detailing proposals for a review of the requirements for life-saving appliances, work permit procedures and fire and explosion protection on offshore installations, together with proposals requiring formal safety assessments to be applied as a continuous process at all stages of an installation's life cycle. In addition, a number of safety notices have been issued drawing the attention of the industry to specific areas of concern. The Government have made it clear that if the Piper Alpha public inquiry can recommend further improvements to the safety regime these will be implemented.

Petroleum Science and Technology Institute

34. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the establishment of the Petroleum Science and Technology Institute.

37. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the establishment of the Petroleum Science and Technology Institute.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Petroleum Science and Technology Institute is now established with a chairman and board of management in office, a director appointed and the first research contracts concluded. The institute has been pledged some £7 million in funding from the oil industry and my Department over the next five years.

Energy Efficiency Office

39. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has for increasing the projected budget for the Energy Efficiency Office for the next financial year.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The budget for the Energy Efficiency Office in 1990-91 is being reviewed in the public expenditure survey. A statement on the outcome of the survey will be made shortly.

EC Energy Commissioner

41. **Mr. Cunliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the Commissioner for Energy of the European Commission; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Wakeham: I last met Senor Cardoso in September in Montreal at the world energy conference. We discussed a range of topics including the Community's efforts to achieve a single market in energy, the implications of widely different circumstances in the energy sectors of Community member states and the relationship between energy and environmental policies.

Nuclear Energy

43. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of how many jobs in the United Kingdom depend on the nuclear power industry.

59. **Mr. Barns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of how many jobs in the United Kingdom depend on nuclear power.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) on 26 June 1989 at columns *688-89*.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what evaluation he has made of the long-term future of the new nuclear company.

Mr. Wakeham: The nuclear company has an assured and long future as the operator of the CEGB's present Magnox and AGR stations. As I said in my statement to the House on 9 November, it should be possible, subject to the views of the nuclear installations inspectorate, for the lifetimes of at least some of the Magnox stations to be extended. The AGRs have many years ahead of them. The company will also have responsibility for building and operating Sizewell B, which will still be generating power 40 years from now. The successful completion and operation of that station will also enable the company to maintain the option to build further PWRs in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what were the latest figures for the cost of nuclear power and nuclear decommissioning quoted by the Central Electricity Generating Board at the Sizewell B and Hinkley Point C inquiries respectively.

Mr. Wakeham: Figures given to the Hinkley Point C public inquiry on the cost of nuclear power—for differing economic cases—are set out in CEGB 4 Addendum 5. CEGB 7 Addendas 7 and 8 cover the costs of construction. Figures for decommissioning are also available in CEGB 4 and CEGB 11.

Material tabled at the Sizewell B inquiry—which closed in March 1985—has been overtaken by that given to the Hinkley inquiry.

I am arranging for copies of the above to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Energy Sources

51. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what incentives there will be to develop renewable sources of energy after the reconstruction of the electricity industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) earlier today.

Coal Industry (Pollution)

54. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps are being taken by the coal industry to help reduce environmental pollution and use energy more efficiently.

60. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps are being taken to assist the coal industry to help reduce environmental pollution and use energy more efficiently.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department is providing up to £8 million towards British Coal's £16 million topping cycle development programme at Grimethorpe. This technology offers a significant improvement in thermal efficiency compared with conventional power generation, coupled with low emissions of sulphur and nitrogen oxides.

British Coal is also at present developing a comprehensive environmental policy covering all aspects of its work, including both the production and consumption of coal.

Margam Pit

57. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has to speed up the exploitation of the Margam coal reserves; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The timing and priority of major projects such as Margam is a matter for British Coal in the light of the overall capital allocation available to it and the commercial objectives agreed with the Government.

Magnox Power Stations

61. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the terms and conditions of employment of those people currently working at Magnox power stations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement made by my right hon. Friend on 9 November at column *1175*.

Wave Power

62. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what further steps he is taking to promote wave power electricity generation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Department of Energy is funding a study to assess the overall United Kingdom shoreline wave energy resource. This survey is being carried out by Queen's university, Belfast.

This study is complementary to the present research and development work funded by the Department on the shoreline rock gully device on the island of Islay.

The objectives of the current phase are the design, manufacture and the installation of an appropriate air driven power turbine and electrical generator and the assessment of the overall productivity, reliability and cost effectiveness of the complete system when connected to the local grid.

In February 1987 the Department published Energy Paper 54 "Energy Technologies for the United Kingdom: 1986 appraisal of research, development and demonstration". This appraisal is due to be updated and a detailed study of wave energy is now in progress as part of the overall appraisal. This study has the following objectives:

To review the technical and commercial viability and prospects for wave energy in the United Kingdom, in the following areas;

shoreline wave energy;

small-scale modular offshore wave energy;

large-scale offshore wave energy;

To review the economic classification of shoreline and offshore wave energy technologies and determine whether they are in the "Economically Attractive", "Promising but Uncertain" or "Long Shot" categories.

A steering group with independent members for the wave

energy study has been appointed as is our normal practice. All interested parties are being consulted during the study and at the stage of the preparation of the report.

Dounreay

64. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the future of UKAEA Dounreay.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to his question on 19 June at columns *11-12*. Since then, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has granted consent for the outline planning application for a European demonstration reprocessing plant.

Mersey Barrage

69. **Mr. Barry Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received regarding the proposals for a Mersey barrage; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Department of Energy and the Mersey Barrage Company are jointly funding feasibility studies into a Mersey barrage. The studies are being advanced to determine whether the Mersey Barrage Company can make an economic case for construction of a Mersey barrage. I expect to meet the chairman of the Mersey Barrage Company shortly to receive a progress report.

Harnessing the Mersey tides could produce approximately 0·5 per cent. of the country's current electricity needs, without fossil fuel emissions, though more studies need to be done on its environmental and regional impact.

Sellafield Reprocessing Plant

73. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about the future of THORP reprocessing plant at Sellafield.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I am advised by BNFL that good progress is being made towards completion of THORP. The fuel receipt and storage facility is operational and commercial reprocessing is expected to begin in late 1992. The company already has contracts valued up to £5 billion which will pay for its investment in the plant.

Offshore Oil Industry

74. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the union representatives in the offshore oil industry; and what was discussed.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I met Mr. Campbell Christie, general secretary of the Scottish Trade Union Congress with other trade union representatives on 7 November for a general discussion.

I chair regular meetings of the offshore industry liaison committee which is a tripartite body including representatives of Government, industry, and the unions. That committee provides a useful forum for discussion of matters relating to the United Kingdom continental shelf. The last meeting on 3 October provided an opportunity for a review of United Kingdom continental shelf developments, and skill shortages.

Coal Imports

76. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many tonnes of coal were imported into Great Britain at the latest available date; if he will list the names of the countries and the respective amounts of coal from each; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Information is available for the period January to September 1989 as shown in the table.

January to September 1989

Country of origin	*Quantity*[1] *(thousand tonnes)*
United States of America	3,538
Australia	1,643
Poland	694
Canada	565
Colombia	480
China	405
South Africa	303
Federal Republic of Germany	213
USSR	157
Netherlands	133
Panama	106
Venezuela	86
Belgium	61
France	42
Norway	37
Others	80
Total	8,544

[1] Figures are rounded independently and the total may therefore differ from the sum of the constituent parts.
Source: Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

Figures for earlier years are published on an annual basis in table 74 of the "Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics".

Power Stations (Decommissioning)

78. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his most recent estimates for the costs of decommissioning Magnox, advanced gas-cooled reactor and pressurised water reactor power stations.

Mr. Michael Spicer: These are matters for the operators of such plant. I am asking the chairmen of the CEGB, SSEB and BNFL to write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what are the current estimates of the date of decommissioning of each nuclear power station;

(2) what is his latest estimate of the total cost of decommissioning each nuclear power station.

Mr. Wakeham: The point at which each nuclear power station will be taken out of service is a matter for the operator to decide taking account of the circumstances at the time. Estimation of the cost of decommissioning each station is also a matter for the operator.

CEGB

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Newport, West, 28 July, *Official Report*, column *981*, when he wrote to the Central Electricity Generating Board requesting that they reply to the hon. Member.

Mr. Michael Spicer: An official from my Department wrote to the CEGB chairman's office on 31 July 1989.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to receive the annual report of the Central Electricity Generating Board for 1988-89.

Mr. Wakeham: Preparation and publication of the annual report and accounts are a matter for the board of the CEGB. I am assured that the accounts will be published as soon as is possible.

Paper-making

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on what Government-sponsored research is either currently taking place or likely to be commissioned in the near future to evaluate the energy consumption rates of different methods of making paper.

Mr. Peter Morrison: As part of their new energy efficiency best practice programme my Energy Efficiency Office will be producing energy consumption guides for various processes in a number of industries. It is presently examining the scope for doing so in the papermaking industry.

Gas Flaring

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much gas has been flared off in each year since United Kingdom continental shelf oil productions commenced.

Mr. Wakeham: Details of the amounts of gas flared from producing oil fields in the United Kingdom continental shelf in each of the years 1978 to 1988 have been published each year since 1979 in my Department's annual report to Parliament (the Brown Book). Figures for years 1975, when UKCS production started, to 1977 are not available.

Scottish Coal

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the current monthly output from the Scottish coalfields of *(a)* deep-mined and *(b)* opencast power station coal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for British Coal. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Electricity Boards

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information his Department's records show about the party affiliations, if any, of non-executive members of electricity boards.

Mr. Wakeham: We do not collect this information in the Department.

Electricity Distribution

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his assessment of the length of the reasonable period ahead over which the distribution companies will need to be clear about their obligations.

Mr. Wakeham: The nature and extent of the distribution companies' obligations will be fully disclosed in the prospectus.

Flue Gas Desulphurisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his current estimate of the cost of flue gas desulphurisation of each 2000 MW fossil-fuel-fired station.

Mr. Wakeham: The precise financial commitment to flue gas desulphurisation will be a commercial matter for the generating companies themselves.

66. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the financial commitment of PowerGen to flue gas desulphurisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: PowerGen will have to comply with the limits set out in the large combustion plant directive agreed in 1988. The precise financial commitment to flue gas desulphurisation will be a commercial matter for the company itself.

Sizewell B

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his current estimate of the cost of providing fuel for Sizewell B.

Mr. Wakeham: Questions about the costs of individual power stations are a matter for the CEGB.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the intended capacity of the plant to fabricate fuel for Sizewell B.

Mr. Wakeham: Most of the production operations for Sizewell B fuel, for which BNFL is currently bidding, would be carried out in plants which also produce fuel for the AGR stations. The combined capacity of these plants is around 300 tonnes of uranium a year. The final assembly work would take place in an existing plant with a capacity of 200 tonnes of uranium a year.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what facilities provided or to be provided by the Atomic Energy Authority, British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., the nuclear installations inspectorate or NIREX, respectively, are intended solely to service the needs of Sizewell B pressurised water reactor.

Mr. Wakeham: The Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate has been involved in all stages of the licensing of Sizewell B, and will continue to deploy its resources in the best possible way to ensure that operators of nuclear installations comply with their statutory requirements for safety. I will ask the chairmen of the other organisations referred to in the hon. Member's question to write directly to him.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 14 November 1989

TRANSPORT

Motorways (Lighting)

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies he is making into the effect on road safety on motorways of sudden transition from lit to unlit sections during hours of darkness or in other poor lighting conditions.

Mr. Atkins: None. Research into driver reaction times in changing from lit to unlit conditions was carried out in the 1970s. I have no evidence to suppose that its conclusions are no longer appropriate. But I am considering the introduction of lighting on further stretches of the motorways network where this can be justified. Lighting can reduce night-time accidents by 30 per cent. This has to be balanced against cost and environmental intrusion.

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he proposes to stagger the transition on motorways from lit to unlit sections to enable drivers to adjust more easily to the changing conditions.

Mr. Atkins: No. Research has shown that the average driver adapts from lit to unlit conditions at night in approximately one second. I am considering the introduction of lighting on further sections of motorway where the economic and safety advantages outweigh the cost and environmental intrusion. The introduction of lighting to fill existing gaps on the network would reduce the number of transitions between lit and unlit sections.

Transport Studies (Greater London)

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many studies of transport within the Greater London area, by or sponsored by his Department, are in progress at the moment; and what is the cost of such studies *(a)* in internal departmental costs and *(b)* in terms of fees and payments to consultants, research organisations, and so on.

Mr. Atkins: The Department is currently sponsoring nine studies into transport within the Greater London area. They are:

Study	*Cost £*
For four London assessment studies	[1]8,550,000
Central London rail study (jointly with BR and LRT)	800,000
East London rail study (jointly with DOE and LRT)	320,000
A4/M4 corridor study	250,000
Primary route signing review	470,000
Development of traffic management and accident prevention measures	1,700,000
Company assisted travel	155,000
Heathrow and South West London orbital movement study (HASQUAD)	700,000
Tourist coaches in London	168,000

[1] Total cost to date.

Some of the studies require the use of the London transportation survey model. The total costs of development, maintenance and use of this model between April 1986 and August 1989 was £2,300,000.

All costs relate to fees. There is no figure available for the internal departmental costs associated with these studies.

Roads

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in the methodology adopted by his Department and its consultants, in the assessment of the effects of new or improved roads, what account is taken of the new traffic generated by the changes.

Mr. Atkins: The amount of entirely new traffic generated by most road schemes is not significant. However, where new traffic may be generated on a significant scale, special techniques are used including traffic models suited to the circumstances of the proposed road. We have asked the standing advisory committee on trunk road assessment to consider the significance of traffic generation and redistribution, and to advise if any changes in methods are required.

Open Space

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in the methodology adopted by his Department and its consultants in assessing what value is put on open space.

Mr. Atkins: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 1 November 1989 at column *192*.

East London Assessment Study

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the Government's capital plans for investment in road and rail in the east London assessment study area over the next 10 years; how much is allocated to *(a)* rail and *(b)* roads; and how much this has changed following recent developments.

Mr. Atkins: The Department's current trunk road programme includes several schemes that are wholly or partly within the east London assessment area with a total works cost of about £150 million (1987 prices). These include the A12 Hackney to M11 link road and several schemes to upgrade the A13. Other schemes in the Department's programme outside the study boundary will also improve access to and conditions within the area. In addition, the London docklands development corporation is carrying out a number of schemes to improve movement within its area.

British Rail and London Regional Transport are responsible for determining long-term investment plans and priorities for rail services within the overall resources available to them. Their plans include major rail investments which will benefit that area of London. Schemes include the introduction of modern rolling stock on many lines; greater capacity on the north London line; resignalling of lines into Liverpool Street station and the major redevelopment of the station itself. Further plans include new stock and resignalling on the London-Tilbury-Southend lines.

Improvements in Underground services include the £720 million modernisation of the Central Line and the reconstruction of Angel station. The City and Beckton extensions of the Docklands light railway are now under way at a cost of over £400 million.

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department will instruct the east London assessment study consultants to reinstate road pricing in the options considered.

Mr. Atkins: It would not be appropriate to do so at this time.

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the consultants carrying out the east London assessment study will be instructed to revise their study in the light of decisions regarding the jubilee line extension and the British Railway crossrail link; and what will be the impact of these rail schemes on the study.

Mr. Atkins: Announcements about decisions on future rail lines in London will be made shortly. The assessment study consultants will take account of those decisions in any further work.

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what account the east London assessment study will take of *(a)* the outcome of the M11 link inquiry, *(b)* the development of the road infrastructure serving docklands and *(c)* the Channel terminus and King's Cross developments;

(2) what consultation will take place regarding the east London assessment study phase IIB report, to be published in December; when consultations will begin and end; who will be consulted; and what is the revised timetable for phase III;

(3) what is the estimated cost of the east London assessment study IIB study; when the results will be made public; and how detailed information will be made available to the public;

(4) what was the cost of the east London assessment study phase IIA study; how many copies of the east London assessment study phase IIA report were printed; what was the cost of printing these copies; how many of these were distributed to *(a)* members of the public, *(b)* hon. Members, *(c)* Government Departments, *(d)* statutory public bodies, *(e)* other public bodies, *(f)* press, *(g)* commercial organisations and *(h)* others; how much per copy these categories were charged; and what was the total gross income from each category;

(5) which options in the east London assessment study impinge on Lea valley and Victoria park.

Mr. Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my right hon. Friend the Member for Brentford and Isleworth (Sir B. Hayhoe) on 23 October at column *374*.

Details of the consultant's work on the east London assessment study which takes account of developments at docklands and King's Cross will be available when the reports are published in December. The outcome of the M11 link inquiry will not be known by this date. For the purpose of the study it has been assumed that the scheme will be carried out.

Arrangements for inviting public comment will be announced when the reports are published. There are no plans for a stage III for the study.

The total cost of the study is estimated at about £2·5 million. The stage 2A report was a consultant's publication and the information requested on its publication cost, sales and distribution is not readily available.

British Rail (Drivers)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what national statistical information he has on the number of drivers employed by British Rail and on how many of them are women.

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Lady should approach the British Railways Board, as this information is not held by the Department.

Bus Drivers

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what statistical information he has on the number of drivers employed by London Buses and on how many of them are women.

Mr. Portillo: None. This is a matter for London Buses Ltd.

London Underground (Drivers)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what statistical information he has on the number of drivers employed by London Underground Ltd. and on the number who are women.

Mr. Portillo: None. This is a matter for London Underground Ltd.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Atkins: The Department has answered 579 oral and 2,507 written questions in the present parliamentary Session.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Atkins: None.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Atkins: This information is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Atkins: This information is not held centrally.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Atkins: Although the Department does not collect many statistics from businesses, there have been some reductions in information gathered in respect of the ports and bus industries since 1979. There have also been changes in the sources and methods used for compiling and publishing statistics. Relieving the burden on suppliers of data has been a major consideration in determining these changes.

The principal reductions in data collection were:

Bus and coach industry: Rationalisation of 35 separate financial and operational data flows into simpler returns. Quarterly return dropped in 1989.

Ports: Reduction in statistics required from ports when DTp took over functions of the National Ports Council in 1980. Some reduction in published data.

Road freight: discontinuation of goods vehicle list because data from DVLC were found to be a satisfactory alternative. A small survey of market conditions in the international road haulage industry for the European Community is now conducted by a private sector organisation.

Publication of statistics has expanded. The latest issue of "Transport Statistics Great Britain" is a larger volume than the 1979 edition, but, as a result of the introduction of desktop publishing methods, the cover price has remained virtually unchanged.

Churchill Flyovers, Liverpool

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the delay in repairing the Churchill flyovers in Liverpool;

(2) on what date the Churchill flyovers in Liverpool were opened; when they were closed for repair; when is the expected date for reopening; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what was the cost of building the Churchill flyovers in Liverpool; and what is the estimated cost of repair.

Mr. Atkins: The Liverpool city council is the highway authority for the Churchill way flyovers and these are questions for the council. However, I understand that the southern flyover is open to traffic although the northern one remains closed.

School Buses

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to make school buses more recognisable by other vehicles.

Mr. Atkins: I attach great importance to improving child safety, including on school buses. Having considered carefully representations from my hon. Friend and others, I have decided that there is a case for requiring buses carrying school children to be marked with a distinctive sign. I shall shortly circulate proposals for consultation in the usual way. This need not stop local authorities making their own plans for improving safety on school buses in advance of [illegible] regulations. I understand that Devon county council is planning to introduce new signs on its buses on an experimental basis from next January.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what regulations exist relating to seating capacity on designated school buses; and if he has any plans to introduce regulations requiring school buses to be fitted with seat belts.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Public Service Vehicles (Carrying Capacity) Regulations 1984 (SI 1984/1406) allow three seated children under the age of 14 to be counted as two passengers.

We already require seat belts on the front seats on new coaches and minibuses. As I told my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) on 27 July our aim is to get this provision extended to all the seats in coaches and minibuses. Meanwhile, we are encouraging local education authorities to specify that wherever possible vehicles used to transport children are fitted with belts and to see that they are worn.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what regulations exist relating to the safety of children who are fare-paying passengers on designated school buses; what regulations exist relating to the supervision of such children; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* All vehicles used to carry fare-paying passengers including school buses must comply with the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986/1078) as amended, and the Public Service Vehicles (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations 1981 (SI 1981/257) as amended.

Although there are no regulations relating to the supervision of children on journeys to or from school, we strongly urge local education authorities, schools and parents to ensure that adequate arrangements exist.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about the safety of children riding on designated school buses.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* A number of parents, school governors, teachers and children have written both direct and through hon. Members, concerning the provision of seat belts and the use of distinguishing signs on vehicles used for carrying children.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Sarawak

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to ban imports from Sarawak in the light of the Malaysian Government's actions against the tribal people of Sarawak.

Mr. Redwood: No. It is the policy of my Department that civil trade with other countries should continue to be determined by commercial considerations.

Chlorofluorocarbons

Mr. Nicholas Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if any assistance or encouragement is being given by his Department to the recycling of freezers so as to dispose of chlorofluorocarbons and provide for their replacement by safer chemicals.

Mr. Forth: Systems are already well established for the recovery and recycling of CFCs used in industrial and commercial refrigerators. Recovery of the small amount of CFCs found in the coolants in domestic refrigerators is

relatively straightforward, and several companies and local authorities have introduced or are planning schemes for CFC recovery from this source. Extraction of CFCs in foam-based insulants is technically much more difficult. My right hon. Friend has commissioned a wide-ranging study into the recovery, recycling and destruction of CFCs and the Government will take its findings into account when considering whether any action is called for on this issue. The results of the study are expected early next year.

Much work is being done to produce substitutes for the range of CFCs currently in use. ICI has recently announced a £30 million plant for manufacturing an alternative to CFC12, used in most fridges. This substitute, known as HFA134A, is the first in a family of planned CFC replacements under development in the United Kingdom.

Voluntary Restraint Agreements

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will publish a table showing the number of voluntary restraint agreements in operation between Japan and the United Kingdom; when each was introduced; for what purpose they were introduced; and what additional sums fall to be paid in each category by consumers in consequence of any assurances required on pricing and other issues; if he will take steps to cancel the restrictions on the imports of cars from Japan: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Redwood: The Government are aware of only one current voluntary restraint arrangement—that on imports of vehicles from Japan, which came into operation in 1975 following discussions between the United Kingdom and Japanese vehicle industries. The arrangement involves no assurance on prices. There have been several academic and other studies attempting to estimate how far the VRA raises overall car prices in the United Kingdom, with results ranging from 2 to 10 per cent.

As part of the preparations for completion of the single market in 1992, the European Commission is expected shortly to make proposals for an EC-wide policy on Japanese vehicle imports. When proposals are available, the Government will give them careful consideration.

Ashdown House

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he hopes to complete the refurbishment of Ashdown house to restore it to full operational use.

Mr. Forth: Refurbishment of the foyer of Ashdown house will be finished by the end of the year. I apologise for any inconvenience the work has caused. The rest of the building is fully operational.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ridley: The information is as follows:

1988-89

	Number
Not available	56
Not separately recorded	6
Not centrally recorded	8
Not recorded in Government statistics	6
Could be provided only at disproportionate cost	16

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: None.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Ridley: During the 1988-89 Session my Department was asked 676 oral and 1,756 written questions.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Thailand

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy that the allocation of any aid in the future to Thailand will be unconnected with arms contracts between the United Kingdom and the Thai Government.

Mrs. Chalker: There is no question of any connection between the allocation of British bilateral aid to Thailand and any arms contracts concluded between the British and Thai Governments.

Biwaters

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contracts have been awarded to Biwaters which have been the subject of Overseas Development Administration financial assistance between 1981 and 1989.

Mrs. Chalker: We do not keep a central record of all the companies with which aid financed contracts are placed. We are aware however, that the following contracts were placed with Biwater, financed from the aid and trade provision:

Aid allocation

Project	*£ million*
1986	
Malaysia rural water supply project	59·460
1988	
Sri Lanka hill country water project	2·129
	61·589

Financial Assistance

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his practice on the provision of financial assistance for projects which have not been the subject of tendering procedures; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Where, exceptionally, contracts have been let without competitive tendering, the ODA has sought to ensure value for money in other ways, including, where appropriate, a detailed review of the contract price.

Iraq (ODA Assistance)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what Overseas Development Administration support has been provided to the republic of Iraq in each year over the last seven years.

Mrs. Chalker: None.

Nigeria (ODA Assistance)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what Overseas Development Administration support was provided to the Government of Nigeria for water control and extraction projects in each year since 1979; and if he will make a statement on the operation of these projects.

Mrs. Chalker: None. But we have just agreed to fund a consultancy in support of a proposed World Bank rehabilitation project in Nigeria.

Euphrates (ODA Assistance)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement as to progress on the Overseas Development Administration-supported water extraction and control project on the Euphrates.

Mrs. Chalker: The Overseas Development Administration is not providing support for such a project.

Malaysia (ODA Assistance)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a statement as to progress on the Overseas Development Adminstration-supported project in Malaysia.

Mrs. Chalker: The Overseas Development Administration supports a number of projects and programmes in Malaysia. They are:

Technical co-operation training programme
Rural primary English project
Teachers training college language proficiency project
Secondary school curriculum project
Geological survey of Malaysia project
Adviser in population projections and demographic statistics
North West water software

North East Thailand Development Project

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what support his Department has given in relation to the contract for the north-east Thailand development project;

(2) whether his Department has made any assessment of the military implications in the contract awarding the north-east Thailand development contract to Messrs. Biwaters;

(3) whether representatives of his Department discussed the contract for the north-east Thailand development project with Biwaters.

Mrs. Chalker: The Government have indicated to the Government of Thailand its readiness in principle to provide aid and trade provision support for the Green-E-Sarn development programme. This has involved discussions with Biwaters who are actively pursuing contracts associated with this programme. The Green-E-Sarn project, while originally put forward by the Thai military authorities, is a civil project for rural development in north-east Thailand, and is the responsibility of the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand: there are thus no military implications for the Department to assess.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Attorney-General how many lawyers have resigned from the Crown prosecution service during the last six months.

The Attorney-General: A total of 38 lawyers resigned from the Crown prosecution service during the six months to 31 October 1989.

Wardship Cases

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Attorney-General how many wardship cases were commenced in the High Court in *(a)* the current year to date, *(b)* 1988, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1986, *(e)* 1985, *(f)* 1984 and *(g)* 1983.

The Attorney-General: The numbers of wardship cases commenced in the High Court in each year from 1983 to 1988 and in the first seven months of 1989 are as follows:

Originating summonses issued

Year	*Number*
1983	2,140
1984	2,408
1985	2,815
1986	3,399
1987	3,605
1988	3,704
1989[1]	2,418

[1] January to July

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Attorney-General what was the cost of the advertising campaign to recruit staff to the Crown prosecution service in *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* the current year to present date.

The Attorney-General: The information, which is only readily available for the financial years beginning 1 April and ending 31 March, is as follows:

	£
1986-87	80,750
1987-88	114,500
1988-89	240,000
1 April 1988 to 31 October 1989	184,330

Family Court

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Attorney-General when the working party into the possibility of a family court last met; and how many Departments were represented on it.

The Attorney-General: The interdepartmental committee on family and domestic jurisdictions, part of whose terms of reference was to examine the feasibility of the establishment of a unified court for the exclusive exercise of jurisdiction in family and domestic matters, last met in August of 1988. The four Departments represented on that Committee were the Lord Chancellor's Department, the Department of Health and Social Security, the Home Office and the Treasury.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Attorney-General how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

The Attorney-General: Other than questions withdrawn or transferred, I was asked 86 oral questions and 391 written questions during the 1988-89 parliamentary Session.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Attorney-General how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

The Attorney-General: None.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Attorney-General how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics and *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Attorney-General: The information requested by the hon. Member is as follows:

(a) 10
(b) 1
(c) 0
(d) 1
(e) 17

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Attorney-General what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

The Attorney-General: The information requested by the hon. Member is not ascertainable.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Attorney-General whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

The Attorney-General: No.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Law of Protective Surveillance, Czechoslovakia

Mr. John Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make representations to the Czechoslovak Government under the terms of the Helsinki Final Act of the Vienna concluding document, concerning continued use of the law of protective surveillance, number 44 of 25 April 1973; and if he will urge the Czechoslovak Government to repeal the law immediately.

Mr. Waldegrave: The documents quoted by my hon. Friend do not contain provisions that would allow us to make representations in the way he proposes. However, we have taken advantage many times of the opportunities provided by the CSCE follow-up and intersessional meetings to remind states such as Czechoslovakia of their CSCE commitments on human rights. We have made clear our concern at all infringements—most recently in August over the detention and hunger strike of the dissident Stanislav Devaty.

North Korea (Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to instruct Her Majesty's ambassador to the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to request Director-General Blix to visit North Korea in order to ascertain the reasons from the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards directorate why North Korea is five years late in accepting the mandatory safeguards provisions following its accession to the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Waldegrave: No. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continues to be in direct contact with the authorities in North Korea about a safeguards agreement. As the hon. Gentleman will be aware, we do not recognise North Korea as a state.

Parties to the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) are obliged, in accordance with its article III, to commence negotiation of safeguards agreements not later than the date of deposit of their instruments of ratification or accession. Such agreements must enter into force not later than 18 months after the date of initiation of negotiations.

Diplomatic Relations

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the countries with which the United Kingdom has no diplomatic relations.

Mr. Salisbury: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 5 May to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn). Since then agreement has been reached with Argentina to re-establish consular relations.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the existing diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Maude: We and our EC partners maintain diplomatic relations with China. But the measures adopted by the Madrid European Council to register our concern at the June events in Peking remain in force.

Recognition of Countries

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries the United Kingdom does not recognise.

Mr. Sainsbury: There are a number of territories not recognised by the United Kingdom as independent sovereign states:

North Korea
Taiwan
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
Micronesia
Palestine
Saharan Arab Democratic Republic
Transkei, Ciskei, Venda and Bophuthatswana (the South African "homelands").

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Sainsbury: The information is as follows:

	Number
Diplomatic wing	
(a)	747
(b)	1,533
ODA wing:	
(a)	240
(b)	380

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Sainsbury: None, except for those that have been transferred.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics and *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Sainsbury: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Sainsbury: The information requested by the hon. Member is not available as it is not recorded centrally.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Sainsbury: The information requested by the hon. Member is not available as it is not recorded centrally.

PRIME MINISTER

United Nations

Q18. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to the United Nations.

The Prime Minister: I attended the UN General Assembly on 8 November, where I gave a speech on environmental policy. I have no further current plans to visit the United Nations.

Homelessness

Q25. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Prime Minister what plans she has to visit hostels for the homeless in London.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Global Warming

Q28. Mr. Boswell: To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations she has received on the subject of global warming.

The Prime Minister: Global warming and climate change were central to debate at the United Nations General Assembly which I attended last week. The Government have given a lead in tackling the problem of climate change, in particular through our aid programme for conserving tropical forests. The United Kingdom is the first developed country to have signed such a conservation agreement with countries with tropical forests. I was pleased to be able to announce at the United Nations that £100 million would be made available under our tropical forest actions programme.

I was also pleased to receive the report of the conclusions of the Noordwijk conference on air pollution and climate change at which the United Kingdom played a leading role. The declaration endorsed the work of the intergovernmental panel on climate change and our call for an international framework convention on climate change.

Food Destruction

Q121. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the level of Community expenditure devoted to the destruction of food.

The Prime Minister: I have argued at several European Councils that action be taken to tackle the waste and expense of the common agricultural policy (CAP). I am pleased to say that the need for reform has now been recognised. Considerable progress has been made towards a more rational and sustainable CAP. I shall certainly take every opportunity to impress upon our Community partners the need to ensure that this process of reform is maintained.

Mr. Bernard Ingham

Q166. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister how much longer she expects Mr. Bernard Ingham to remain as press secretary in No. 10 Downing street.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Ingham will remain as chief press secretary in No. 10 until it is time for him to leave.

Local Government Finance

Q168. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Prime Minister what representations she has received regarding the introduction of the community charge.

The Prime Minister: The Government continue to receive many representations on the community charge which is increasingly being recognised as a fairer alternative to domestic rates. It also relates to ability to pay where it matters most. A total of 9·5 million community charge payers are expected to be eligible for rebates. Most local authorities have welcomed the arrangements for transitional relief announced last month.

Water Act

Q189. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she will make a statement on the implementation of the Water Act.

The Prime Minister: I welcome the rapid implementation of the Water Act, which is strengthening the protection of our water environment and will deliver a thriving, efficient, private sector water industry within strong and essential public regulation.

Wolverhampton

Q191. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she will visit Wolverhampton.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Stroud

Q212. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she will visit Stroud.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Overseas Aid Assistance

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Prime Minister whether representatives of Her Majesty's Government have discussed with foreign Governments arms or civil engineering contracts which have been connected with overseas aid assistance.

The Prime Minister: Overseas aid is frequently used to finance civil engineering contracts that are of benefit to developing countries. It is not used in connection with sales of military equipment.

Bank of England

Sir David Price: To ask the Prime Minister what is her policy towards the scheme for the independence of the Bank of England.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to my reply to the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) on 2 November 1989, *Official Report*, column 464.

Public Transport

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister on which date she last used public transport to attend an official function in Britain; and what was the type of transport used.

The Prime Minister: I travelled by train to an official function on 31 August 1989.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Prime Minister how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of her Department in 1988-89.

The Prime Minister: This information is not held centrally. However, an approximate record of this information is held in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Prime Minister how many written parliamentary questions she refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

The Prime Minister: Of those questions not transferred, none.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Prime Minister how many written parliamentary questions addressed to her received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Prime Minister: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Prime Minister what was the cost of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions by her office in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

The Prime Minister: As many questions have to be referred to other Departments we do not calculate these items specifically here.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Prime Minister whether her office has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

The Prime Minister: Until July 1989 the Central Statistical Office reported to me. During that period it was not responsible for collecting statistics. Changes in the basis of compilation, presentation and publication of statistical series were made from time to time in response to the requirements of Government and international organisations for statistical information. Other changes reflected changes in administrative systems on which some series are based, the development of new statistical data. When such changes were made they were fully documented in the relevant statistical publications.

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 14 November.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with Ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties

in the House, I shall be having further meetings this afternoon. This evening I hope to have an Audience of Her Majesty the Queen.

WALES

Rating Reform

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing for each local authority area in Wales the proportion of poll tax registration forms which have been duly returned to his registration officer.

Mr. Peter Walker: This information is not held centrally. I understand, however, that the Welsh charging authorities have achieved high levels of registration. I expect to receive details of registered population from each charging authority shortly.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will take steps to ensure that holiday homes which seek to be treated for poll tax purposes under the standard business rating system will be required to obtain a change of use approval from the local planning authority before any such rating designation is operational.

Mr. Peter Walker: No. The question whether any given hereditament, such as a holiday home, is to be regarded as non-domestic and so rateable is a matter for the valuation officer, whose decision will be made having regard to regulations which are to be made under powers conferred by the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The regulations will be laid before the House shortly.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether any instructions or guidelines have been issued by the Welsh Office to district councils in Wales concerning the collection of community charges on a weekly or monthly basis from people facing difficulties in making the full payment; and what conditions have been placed on local authorities in facilitating any such staged payment scheme.

Mr. Peter Walker: All Welsh local authorities have been sent a copy of community charge practice note No. 12, "Collection of the Community Charge". Paragraphs 4.7—4.9 of that practice note remind authorities that some ratepayers will be accustomed to paying rates and rent together on a weekly or fortnightly schedule; and recommend authorities to consider how far they wish to afford chargepayers the opportunity to pay on a weekly or fortnightly basis, having regard to the benefits to chargepayers and the additional administrative costs involved. A copy of the practice note is in the Library of the House.

Heart Disease

Mr. Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what further resources he will make available to the National Health Service in Wales to enable more hospitals to treat heart patients and to fit pacemakers.

Mr. Grist: Substantial additional funds have recently been made available to improve access to cardiac treatment for patients in Clwyd, to secure additional cardiological and cardiac surgery procedures for adults and children in other parts of Wales and to build a new paediatric cardiac unit in Cardiff. In addition, consideration is being given to securing a further expansion of adult cardiac services, including the development of a second cardiac centre in Wales.

Schools Management

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if, pursuant to his answer of 7 November to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside, he will make a statement on the year-on-year cost of the operation and administration of local management of schools in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: It is for LEAs to assess the cost associated with the preparation and introduction of schemes for financial delegation to schools. These assessments form the basis for their bids to the Department of specific grant support.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 7 November to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside, if he will state *(a)* the exact figure for specific grant support for expenditure on local management of schools for the period 1989-90 to 1991-92, *(b)* the planned cash figure for specific grant support for expenditure on local management of schools for (i) 1989-90, (ii) 1990-91 and (iii) 1991-92 and *(c)* in separate columns for 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92 and for the total specific grant support for expenditure on local management of schools for (1) the introduction of local management, (2) the training of governors and (3) local education authority inspection.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information is shown in the table:

£ million

	1989-90	*1990-91*	*1991-92*	*Total*
Introduction of local management	1·0	1·652	1·652	4·304
Training of Governors	0·4	0·4	0·4	1·2
LEA inspection	0·16	0·4	0·56	1·12
Total	1·56	2·452	2·612	6·624

Computers (Schools)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment his Department has made of the need for additional computers for educational needs in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Department launched a five-year strategy to develop information technology across the curriculum in 1988-89. Funding within the education support grant programme provides increased equipment levels and an advisory teacher service in schools. The Department is currently considering ways to focus the programme to support the implementation of technology as a subject in the national curriculum.

National Curriculum

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what action he is taking to ensure that adequately trained teachers are available to teach technology under the national curriculum; and what proposals he has for the retraining of teachers who are not specialist technology

teachers and that courses for student teachers are amended to take account of the technology component of the national curriculum.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The in-service teacher training scheme provides for the training of existing teachers. Although it is the responsibility of local education authorities to ensure that teachers are adequately trained to teach their speciality subjects, we have increased significantly the resources available next year through the local education authority training grant scheme to enable LEAs to carry out the training required.

The new arrangements just announced for the accreditation of initial teacher training make express provision for the training of design and technology for intending primary teachers alongside all other subjects in the primary curriculum.

A bursary of £1,300 is paid, in addition to the usual mandatory award entitlement, to attract students to secondary post graduate certificate of education courses in craft, design and technology. A further incentive supplement of £1,200 is available to those students if they follow an extended Welsh-medium course.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will make a statement on the implementation of the teaching of technology under the national curriculum.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has undertaken a consultation on proposals for technology in the national curriculum. Responses to the consultation are being analysed and considered at the present time. The introduction of technology into schools as a national curriculum subject will be preceded by a further consultation on draft orders and the making of final orders.

Clwyd Local Education Authority

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a special allocation of funds to Clwyd local education authority to enable it to facilitate adequate full-time staffing in *(a)* high schools, *(b)* primary schools and *(c)* infants schools, consequent upon local management of schools and the requirements of new legislation.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: In 1989-90 Clwyd LEA received specific grant support for expenditure of £141,000 for the introduction of local management and £46,700 for staff development and support for the introduction of the national curriculum core subjects. Its bids for 1990-91 are currently being considered along with those of the other Welsh LEAs.

In addition, an allocation of some £500,000 will be available in 1990-91 from the LEA training grants scheme to assist the LEA with the provision of in-service teacher training to ensure that teachers in Clwyd are adequately prepared for the delivery of the national curriculum.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a special allocation of funds to Clwyd local education authority to enable it to facilitate adequate ancillary staffing in *(a)* high, *(b)* primary and *(c)* infant schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The responsibility for the number of ancillary staff employed in Clwyd schools lies entirely with the education authority which must decide such matters in line with its assessment of priorities within the education service.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a special allocation of funds to Clwyd local education authority to enable the authority to improve its capitation allowances by a minimum of 10 per cent. in *(a)* infants, *(b)* primary and *(c)* high schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The responsibility for the level of capitation allowances in Clwyd schools lies entirely with the education authority which must decide such matters in line with its assessment of priorities within the question service.

School Meals

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the future of the school meals service in Wales consequent upon the local management of schools.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Government's policy on the future of the school meals service is set out in paragraphs 62 to 64 of Welsh Office circular 36/88, a copy of which is in the Library. We will be prepared to consider excepting the service from delegation to schools where there is a clearly identified need for the local education authority to retain control. However, we would expect the service to be delegated, subject to the overriding provisions of the competition requirements of the Local Government Act 1988, where a school can demonstrate that it is able to provide a service, including appropriate health and nutritional standards, at least as economically as the local education authority.

Food Poisoning

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many incidents of food poisoning were recorded in Wales between April and October of the current year; and what were the half-yearly figures recorded in Wales during the last three years.

Mr. Grist: There were 2,120 notifications to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys of food poisoning in Wales between 1 April and 27 October 1989. Half-yearly statistics for the past three years are shown in the table:

Notifications[1] of food poisoning

	January to June	*July to December*
1986	488	925
1987	687	988
1988	784	[2]1,169
1989	[2]1,022	

[1] Includes food poisoning formally notified and food poisoning ascertained by other means.

[2] Data from the fourth quarter 1988 onwards are derived from OPCS Monitor, Weekly Return (WR Series) and are provisional. Preceding data are derived from OPCS Monitor, Infectious Diseases (MB2 Series).

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much time it takes on average for incidents of food poisoning in Wales to be communicated to the population at large.

Mr. Grist: Local authorities have the prime responsibility for controlling food poisoning outbreaks, but in

certain circumstances the Welsh Office may be involved. Most incidents are small in scale and/or confined to a readily identifiable group of people. As such warnings to the public at large are not necessarily appropriate. Where however the extent and geographical distribution of a particular incident warrants a general warning, the aim is to issue suitable, specific guidance as soon as it is practicable to do so.

During the recent serious incident of food poisoning involving salmonella typhimurium in north Wales, several press notices containing specific advice to the public were released by the Department. On each occasion, the notice was released on the same date as the information it contained was received from the local authorities involved.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: The number of oral and written questions asked were 224 and 1,606 respectively.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary session 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: None, except for a few transferred to other Departments for answer.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: My Department collects and publishes a wide range of statistical material covering many aspects of life in the Principality. The latest list of regular statistical publications is shown as follows. Those marked with an asterisk were also published in 1979. This list illustrates the increased availability of Welsh Office statistics. In addition to the regular publications there is a range of ad hoc statistical bulletins.

The very quantity of statistics now published by the Department means that information on all changes to individual statistics could be supplied only at disproportionate cost. These changes result from the continuous process of attempting to improve the coverage and relevance of Welsh Office statistics. There are regular reviews which lead to changes in the basis of compilation, presentation and publication. These arise in response to the Government's requirements for statistical information, changes in the administrative systems on which some series are based, and the development of new technological developments affecting the compilation and dissemination of statistical data.

Regular Publications in 1989

Activities of Social Services Departments
Children in Care
Commercial and Industrial Floorspace Statistics
*Digest of Welsh Statistics
Environmental Digest for Wales
Farm Income in Wales
*Health and Personal Social Services
Household Projections for the Counties of Wales
Key Statistical Indicators for NHS Management
Mental Health Statistics
Population Projections for the Counties of Wales
Road Accidents
Residential Accommodation for the Elderly, Younger Physically Handicapped and Blind
*[1] Statistics of Education: Further and Higher Education
Statistics of Education: Schools
Staff of Social Services Departments
*Welsh Agricultural Statistics
*Welsh Economic Trends
Welsh Hospital Waiting List Bulletin
Welsh Housing Statistics
*Welsh Local Government Financial Statistics
*Welsh Social Trends
Welsh Transport Statistics

* Published in 1979.
[1] In 1979, these two volumes were published in one entitled "Statistics of Education in Wales".

Ad hoc Publications

Crime Prevention Topics
Digest of Welsh Historical Statistics
Incidence of Congenital Malformations
Statistics of Road Lengths
Survey of House Renovation Grants
Wales Cancer Reports
Welsh Education Statistics Bulletins
Welsh House Condition Surveys
Welsh Inter Censal Survey

ENVIRONMENT

Leicester Schools (Ancillary Workers)

119. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many ancillary workers are employed in Leicester schools; and how many were so employed in October 1979.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: This information is not held centrally.

Nature Conservancy Council

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of grant paid by his Department over the last financial year to the Nature Conservancy Council; and how much of this money was spent on *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

Heveningham Hall

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide the figure of the total sum spent on Heveningham hall on repairs, on central heating and on the introduction of other services, following its purchase in 1970 to the time of its sale in 1981, detailing the separate expenditures; and whether he has received any representations since 1981 seeking public funds for further work on the hall.

Mr. Trippier: I regret that this information is no longer available. We have received no such representations from the present owner.

Boot and Boswell Dwellings

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the position of Boot and Boswell defective dwellings in Liverpool.

Mr. Chope: Liverpool have reported the following ownerships for Boot and Boswell dwellings:

	Local authority	*Private owners*
Boot	1,073	401
Boswell	926	568

The city council has received 786 applications for assistance under the housing defects legislation and has discussed its statutory obligations in detail with my officials.

Air Pollution

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money has been spent from 1987 to the current year by Her Majesty's Government on monitoring air pollution by *(a)* nitrogen oxides and their reaction with hydrocarbons, *(b)* sulphur dioxide and *(c)* lead pollution; and what information he has on the comparable expenditure of other European Community states.

Mr. Trippier: United Kingdom Government expenditure on monitoring nitrogen oxides (NOx) and the products of their reaction with gaseous hydrocarbons, sulphur dioxide and lead between 1987-88 and 1989-90 was as follows:

£k.

	1987-88	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
(a) Nitrogen oxides and their reaction with hydrocarbons			
NO_2 directive network	131·0	115·0	117·5
Rural ozone-NOx network	538·2	435·0	435·0
Total	669·2	550·0	552·5
(b) Sulphur dioxide			
SO_2-smoke directive network	159·0	164·0	183·0
SO_2 rural network	45·9	48·8	50·0
Acid deposition network	634·0	496·0	421·0
Total	838·9	708·8	654·0
(c) Lead			
Total: all lead networks	44·2	43·6	44·2
(d) Preparation of emission inventories for NOx, volatile organic hydrocarbons, sulphur dioxide, lead and other pollutants	87·8	98·0	106·0
Grand totals	1,640·1	1,400·4	1,356·7

There is no internationally agreed database on European Community expenditure for pollution monitoring.

Expenditure on a monitoring network is normally greater in the initial years while it is being established than later when it is operating routinely.

Carbon Dioxide

Mr. David Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the terms of the agreement reached by the industrial countries' meeting in Noordwijk, concerning emissions of carbon dioxide; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I have today placed a copy of the Noordwijk declaration on atmospheric pollution and climate change in the Library. I am pleased that the United Kingdom was able to play a part in securing agreement on carbon dioxide emissions contained in the declaration, but this is only one of a number of important conclusions. I also very much welcome the unanimous commitment to the early negotiation of a framework convention on climate change.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he can give of the total reduction of British emissions of carbon dioxide which will be achieved as a result of the conference and agreement reached at Noordwijk.

Mr. Trippier: The agreement reached at Noordwijk was for a stabilisation of CO_2 emissions as a first step by industrialised nations. The detailed basis for such a stabilisation, together with options for a longer-term target regime are to be considered at the second world climate conference in the light of the IPCC interim report.

Partridges

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 1 November, *Official Report*, column *237*, why he has decided to extend the open general licence to release chukar and hybrid partridges into the wild.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: The decision to extend the open general licence to release chukar and hybrid partridges until the end of 1992 was based upon advice from the Government's species advisers, the Nature Conservancy Council, following the report from the Game Conservancy. No releases of chukars or their hybrids will be allowed beyond this date.

Planning Appeals

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he intends to bring his planning guidance note No. 3 into the arena of appeals decision-making; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: Yes. A revised version of planning policy guidance note No. 3 (PPG3) on housing was issued as a

consultation document on 4 October, and comments may be made until 5 January 1990. My right hon. Friend intends to issue a new PPG3 early in the new year, as soon as he has had the chance to consider the responses to the consultation paper. It will then formally become Government policy, to be taken into account, along with other material considerations, in planning appeal decisions.

Sports and Recreational Clubs

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will place in the Library a copy of the draft guidelines he has issued to local authorities regarding non-domestic rates relief for sports and recreational clubs from April 1990.

Mr. Chope: The draft guidelines, which were issued as a consultation document, are being revised in the light of responses received. We intend to issue them shortly in the form of a practice note for charging authorities which will also be available to interested organisations. A copy of the practice note will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Conservation of Wild Birds

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the terms of reference for the Nature Conservancy Council's current overview of areas meeting the criteria for designation under the European Community directive on the conservation of wild birds.

Mr. Trippier: The NCC was asked to produce an overview setting out the requirements for the British series of special protection areas to ensure:

> the proper protection, survival and requisition of species listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive throughout their natural range in Great Britain;
> the safeguard of important breeding, moulting, wintering and nesting sites of migratory birds not listed on Annex 1; particular attention being paid to wetlands and especially those of international importance.

Formal terms of reference were not provided.

Mr. Morley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the Nature Conservancy Council's overview of special protection areas has delayed the designation of sites under the European Community directive on the conservation of wild birds; and whether additional resources have been made available to the Nature Conservancy Council in order to conduct the study.

Mr. Trippier: The Government have continued consultations in respect of sites notified by the NCC as potential special protection areas in parallel with the NCC's production of the study. No additional resources were provided as the NCC took the view that the necessary expertise was available.

Leicester (Ministerial Visits)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he or any of his Ministers next intends to visit Leicester.

Mr. Chope: I intend to visit Leicester on 22 November to tour an estate action scheme and discuss housing matters with Leicester city council.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Chris Patten: So far this Session approximately 5,800 questions have been tabled to my Department. Of these 1,050 were tabled for oral answer and 133 actually received an oral reply. The remainder have received a written answer.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Chris Patten: It is the policy of my Department to answer all parliamentary questions except those involving disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many written parliamentary questions received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Chris Patten: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Chris Patten: This information is not held centrally.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Chris Patten: The statistics collected by all Government Departments are subject to regular and searching reviews, as a result of which some surveys are eliminated and many are substantially modified.

The following are the major published statistical series that have been dropped or introduced by my Department since 1979.

Series Dropped Since 1979

Commercial and industrial floorspace statistics.
Private enterprise housing enquiry.
Local authority salary and wage statistics.
Local authority expenditure budget estimates (at November prices).
Local authority design work statistics.
Subcontracted construction output statistics.
EC state of trade enquiry (for construction).
Local authority funded housing association tender acceptance statistics.

Series Introduced Since 1979

Enterprise zone annual monitoring statistics.
Land use change statistics.
Renovation grants applications and approvals statistics.
Expansion of council house sales statistics to cover 'right to buy' purchases.
Planning appeals statistics.

Information from local authorities on selective tendering.
Carbon dioxide and ozone statistics.
Land registers computerised service.
Statistics under the tradeable information initiative.
Statistics on county councils planning decisions.

Rent Arrears

Sir Hugh Rossi: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many local authorities have failed to comply with their statutory requirements to make up and balance their accounts within six months of the end of each financial year by more than *(a)* six months, *(b)* 12 months, *(c)* 18 months, *(d)* two years, *(e)* three years and *(f)* four years in arrears.

Mr. David Hunt: Such information is not held by the Department or centrally by the Audit Commission. However, the Audit Commission's 1987-88 report showed that 80 local authorities had not published their 1986-87 accounts by 31 December 1987, and of those, 45 had still not published by mid-March 1988. The Audit Commission's 1988-89 report showed that 32 local authorities had not published their 1987-88 accounts by 31 December 1988 and, of those, 12 had still not published by June 1989.

Sir Hugh Rossi: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps are open to him in respect of local authorities which have failed to comply with their statutory requirements to make up and balance their accounts within six months of the end of each financial year; and what such steps he has taken.

Mr. David Hunt: Any person failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the statutory requirements is liable to prosecution. The auditor is best placed to judge whether such legal action would be warranted or be likely to succeed.

Consultation Papers

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the consultation papers on local government finance he has issued to local authorities or local authority associations during 1989, giving for each the date on which it was issued and the date by which comments were requested.

Mr. David Hunt: The information requested is as follows:

Title	*Date of issue*	*Response required by*
Non-Domestic Rating		
Local Rating Lists and Cross-Boundary Property Regulations	31 January 1989	28 March 1989
Non-Domestic Rating: Transition	16 February 1989	14 April 1989
Valuation of Composite Hereditaments	20 February 1989	14 April 1989
Local Non-Domestic Rate (Collection and Enforcement) Regulations 1989	21 February 1989	24 April 1989
Payments into the Non-Domestic Rate Pool	20 March 1989	12 May 1989
Valuation for Rating (Mines and Quarries) Regulations 1989	23 March 1989	19 May 1989
Rating Lists: Alterations and Appeals	28 March 1989	26 May 1989
Non-Domestic Rating: Decapitalisation Rate	3 April 1989	19 May 1989
Discretionary Rate Relief	4 April 1989	26 May 1989
Rating Valuation of Public Utilities	14 July 1989	12 September 1989
Duty of Charging Authorities to Consult	28 July 1989	22 September 1989
Unoccupied Property Rates	25 September 1989	31 October 1989
Central Rating Lists and the Prescription of Rateable Values	4 October 1989	6 November 1989
Rate Demand Notice and Accompanying Information	4 October 1989	6 November 1989
Charging Authority's Duty to Supply Information to the VO	4 October 1989	6 November 1989
Leisure Caravan Parks	20 October 1989	18 November 1989
Valuation and Community Charge Tribunal Regulations: Consultation Paper on Amendments to Cover Non-Domestic Rating Appeals	27 October 1989	24 November 1989
Precepts and Levies		
Draft Collection Fund Regulations	30 August 1989	20 October 1989
General Provisions for Levying Bodies	18 October 1989	10 November 1989
Grant		
Revenue Support Grant 1990-91	6 November 1989	4 December 1989
Capital Finance		
Revised Block Borrowing Approval	14 February 1989	16 March 1989
Specific Grants on Loan Charges	14 April 1989	19 May 1989
Further paper on specific grants on Loan charges	25 August 1989	29 September 1989
ERDF Grants	25 September 1989	No date given
Costs of credit arrangements	10 October 1989	3 November 1989
Regulations to be made under Part IV of the Local Government and Housing Bill	18 October 1989	17 November 1989
Approval Investments	19 October 1989	24 November 1989
Further Proposals for Regulations	24 October 1989	17 November 1989

Advertising Campaign (Community Charge)

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish full details of his planned advertising campaign to publicise the poll tax relief and rebate schemes, including the proposed start date for the campaign; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The Government have no plans to introduce a poll tax. We are, however, planning an information campaign to ensure that those eligible are aware of entitlement to community charge benefits and transitional relief, the details of which have not yet been settled.

Rate Support Grant

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which authority, and which data for local authorities, have occasioned the need for a rate support grant supplementary report for 1989-90, notified in a letter to local authorities on 7 November; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Hunt: The need for a supplementary report has arisen because of incorrect data being used for road lengths in the London borough of Croydon.

Metal Discharges

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any proposals under consideration for the imposition of more stringent controls on industry to prevent discharges of metals into the sewerage system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* We have announced our intention to bring forward proposals to introduce strict new integrated pollution controls over industrial sectors with the greatest pollution potential. These controls will cover the release of wastes to all media, including sewers.

Meanwhile, the Water Act 1989 and the Trade Effluents (Prescribed Processes and Substances) Regulations 1989, which came into force on 1 September, introduced new controls over discharges to sewer of a number of priority substances, including several groups of metal compounds. Proposals for new or altered discharges to sewer containing these substances must be referred to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who also has powers to review existing consents. In exercising his powers of determination in such cases my right hon. Friend will be guided by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution as to the best available technology not entailing excessive cost for reducing inputs of these substances to a minimum.

In addition, Department of the Environment circular 7/89, issued earlier this year, set environmental quality standards in rivers and marine waters for a range of metals. Where these standards are not met, the National Rivers Authority is required to undertake programmes for pollution reduction, which may in some cases entail tighter controls on discharges from sewers and sewage treatment works, and hence on trade effluent inputs to the sewerage system.

Horton Bank Top Reservoir

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will direct Yorkshire Water to publish a report on the safety of Horton Bank Top reservoir recently prepared following an inspection by an inspecting engineer drawn from a panel appointed by his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* The Secretary of State has no power to direct the publication of reports to reservoir owners by panel engineers. Enforcement of the requirements of the Reservoir Act 1975 is the responsibility of county and metropolitan district councils, to which engineers have to send copies of their reports.

Greenhouse Effect

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what implications the Forestry Commission's research into the storage of carbon in trees and timber has for future environmental policy in Great Britain.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* Better figures for carbon fixation will help in evaluating the role forestry might play in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and the value of further encouraging forestry in the United Kingdom.

Water Conservation

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the percentage of water lost in the process of distribution from the reservoir onwards by each of the water companies in England and Wales;

(2) if he will publish a table showing the percentage of water lost in the course of distribution and the comparable figure for each of the past five years for each of the water companies in England and Wales.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* This information is not held centrally. Water companies can however make broad estimates of unaccounted for water and the latest figures available for the water service companies within the water groups about to be privatised are contained in the "Pathfinder Prospectus", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the statutory provisions which relate to his powers in relation to the conservation of water by water companies in England and Wales and the methods of conservation to which they relate.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* Under section 37 of the Water Act 1989, water undertakers have a duty to develop and maintain an efficient and economical system of water supply within their area. This duty is enforceable by the Secretary of State under section 20 of the Act. The Secretary of State also has powers under sections 131 and 132 of the Act to make orders, on application by the National Rivers Authority or by water undertakers, authorising the taking of steps to meet deficiencies in the supply of water arising from exceptional shortage of rain.

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what target he has set for each of the water companies in England and Wales to achieve in order to reduce the percentage loss of water during the course of distribution; and by what date he requires them to reach that target.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* My right hon. Friend sets no such targets. However, all the water service companies within the water groups which are about to be privatised have programmes to reduce water losses and some have set specific targets, which are set out in the "Pathfinder Prospectus", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Rate Rebates

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the number of persons receiving rate rebate in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1989 and the number of total persons who will either be (i) exempt from or (ii) paying less than the full community charge for their district.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested concerning rate rebates is shown in the table as follows:

Estimated numbers receiving rate rebates—Great Britain

	Million
1979-80	3·065
1989-90	5·5

Notes:

1. Before 1982-83 assistance with rates was through the supplementary benefit scheme run by the Department and the rate rebate scheme run by the Department of the Environment. Assistance with housing costs was harmonised into a single scheme when housing benefit was introduced for some supplementary benefit claimants from November 1982. Full implementation for all claimants followed from April 1983. The information for 1979-80 represents the numbers receiving rate rebates through the rate rebate scheme only; the number receiving assistance through supplementary benefit is not available.
2. The figure for 1989-90 includes community charge rebates in Scotland, which, in the case of couples, are counted as one rebate.

Latest estimates are that 620,000 people in Great Britain will be exempt from the community charge and that between a quarter and a third of those liable for the full charge will receive community charge benefit.

ENERGY

Electricity Prices

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consultations he has had with the chairman of the Electricity Council regarding the impact of the privatisation of the electricity supply industry on the level of electricity prices to the domestic consumer.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I have regular meetings with the chairman of the Electricity Council to discuss a range of subjects relating to the electricity industry.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consultations he has had with the director-general of the Office of Electricity Regulation regarding the effect on consumer electricity prices of the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I have had a number of meetings with the Director-General of Electricity Supply to discuss a range of subjects relating to the privatisation of the electricity industry.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy who will decide the price charged for electricity by the new nuclear company.

Mr. Wakeham: Electricity sale contracts will be for negotiation between the new company and the area boards. The contracts will be subject to Government approval.

Hinkley Point C

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consultations he has had with the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board about the public inquiry into the proposed Hinkley Point C pressurised water reactor nuclear power station.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend has asked the CEGB to consider urgently what action it wishes to take with respect to its application for his consent to build a PWR station at Hinkley Point C in the light of his statement to the House on Thursday 9 November 1989 at columns 1175-76.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the public Exchequer contribution to the cost of decommissioning and reprocessing of the nuclear power stations of *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Scotland under schedule 12 to the Electricity Act.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The way in which schedule 12 will be used will be reviewed in the light of the setting up of separate nuclear companies. However, the company holding the nuclear stations presently owned by the CEGB is expected to have a cash surplus from its first years of operation, and I understand from my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland that the position is expected to be similar there.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) on what date the Government recognised that nuclear power is more costly than power from fossil-fuelled generating stations; and what are the current respective estimated costs;

(2) what was the source of the information that led his Department to recognise that nuclear power was more expensive than power from conventional stations.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* Advice given to me is confidential. However, the CEGB provided evidence to the Hinkley Point inquiry on 6 December 1988 about the comparative costs of a PWR and coal-fired capacity, a copy of which has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of *(a)* the percentage of electricity generation currently met by nuclear power and *(b)* the likely percentage in each year to the year 2000.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* According to the CEGB, the percentage of electricity generated by nuclear power in England and Wales in 1988-89 was 17·4. Future levels will depend upon a number of factors which cannot be forecast with precision.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what were the unprecedented guarantees on the costs of nuclear power stations which were being sought by National Power.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The details of my negotiations with National Power are confidential. It argued that it should receive extensive protection against financial risks arising from a variety of potential circumstances relating to the construction and operation of stations and to the statutory regime governing them.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy which Magnox nuclear power stations he estimates can have an extended life.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* This will be a matter for the nuclear company. The continuing operation of nuclear power stations has to be licensed by the nuclear installations inspectorate.

CEGB

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is his latest estimate of the capital value of the assets scheduled to go to National Power, PowerGen and Gridco, respectively;

(2) what is his latest estimate of the capital value of the nuclear power stations to be retained in the public sector.

Mr. Wakeham: It is too early to assess the value of the assets assigned to each of the CEGB's successor companies: it will depend on a number of factors including the term of the power supply and other contracts which have yet to be included.

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, if he will make a statement on the effect on employment at Central Electricity Generating Board, Barnwood, Gloucester, following his announcement on nuclear power on 9 November.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* This will be a matter for the CEGB and the management boards of National Power and the nuclear company.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Wakeham: During the 1988-89 Session up to and including 13 November 1989, the number of questions asked of my Department was *(a)* 469 orals and *(b)* 1,204 written.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Wakeham: None. It is my policy to give an answer to all questions within my responsibility other than those where the answers can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Wakeham: This information is a matter of public record but can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Wakeham: This information is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Wakeham: The Department of Energy publishes energy statistics in "Energy Trends" each month, the "Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics" each year and the annual report on the "Development of the Oil and Gas Resources of the United Kingdom"—the Brown Book. These publications are regularly reviewed and their contents rationalised in response to the Government's requirements for statistical information and the changing nature of the energy industry. There have been a number of changes made to the statistics collected and published in these booklets since 1979. However, reductions in the collection and publication of statistical series have been relatively few. These have included a reduction in the statistics for coal industry operations and finance; a reduction in the statistics of town gas manufacture; the discontinuation of statistics on two star petrol prices; and the rationalisation of coal stocks data and some electricity data to avoid duplication. In many cases the information remains available from alternative sources.

Mr. John Collier

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how much Mr. John Collier will be paid as chairman of the new nuclear company.

Mr. Wakeham: It has been agreed that Mr. Collier's salary will be £125,000 a year.

AGRs

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information on the costs of advance gas-cooled reactors become available after the July announcement of the decision not to privatise the Magnox stations.

Mr. Wakeham: National Power informed us of indicative prices and outline contract terms it was seeking for the sale of electricity from the AGRs during confidential discussions. As I made clear in my statement of 9 November at columns 1175-76, these were unacceptable.

Electricity Distribution

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the present amount of power being fed into the national grid from sources other than the

Central Electricity Generating Board, in total and as a percentage; and what is his estimate for future years of the amount and percentage that will be fed in from other than on Central Electricity Generating Board generating capacity.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The CEGB informs me that during 1988-89 a total of 16·4 TWh was provided from outside sources, 6·6 per cent. of the total electricity supplied. The Government's proposals for privatisation will lead to greater competition in electricity generation in future years.

Renewables (Special Tranche)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the current state of progress on the 600MW special tranche of renewables announced by the right hon. Member for City of Chester (Mr. Morrison) during the summer.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* As I made clear in my statement on 9 November, we will maintain the arrangements for the 600 MW tranche for renewables. These were spelt out in another place by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary on 15 June.

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has received any representations from the chairman designate of PowerGen about the division of assets between that company and National Power.

Mr. Wakeham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* I meet the chairman-designate frequently to discuss a wide range of matters relating to electricity privatisation. These discussions are confidential.

Scottish Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has for the management of the Scottish nuclear power stations after vesting day in the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Lang: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the statement made to the House on 9 November by my right hon. and learned Friend.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment Training

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what types of training are being undertaken by people on employment training in *(a)* engineering, *(b)* construction and *(c)* information technology industries; and how many places are available for each type.

Mr. Nicholls: Employment training provides many types of training to meet the demands of local labour markets. Information about the numbers of places available in each training occupational category is held in every area office, but because of the local focus of the programme is not currently aggregated centrally.

Employment (Leeds)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons in the Leeds metropolitan district there were in *(a)* full-time employment, *(b)* part-time employment and *(c)* temporary employment for each year from 1979 (i) by gender and (ii) as a percentage of all employees in *(x)* manufacturing industry and *(y)* the service sector industry.

Mr. Nicholls: The available employee estimates for the area are from censuses of employment taken in September 1981, September 1984 and September 1987 and are given in the table.

Employees in employment[1] in the Leeds metropolitan district[2]

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 1980	*Divisions of SIC*	*September 1981*		*September 1984*		*September 1987*	
		Number (thousand)	*Per cent.[3]*	*Number (thousand)*	*Per cent.[3]*	*Number (thousand)*	*Per cent.[3]*
Manufacturing industries	2-4	85·5	28·3	71·8	24·4	72·6	24·6
Male full-time		60·3	20·0	50·9	17·3	51·9	17·6
part-time		0·9	0·3	0·7	0·2	0·8	0·3
Female full-time		18·8	6·2	15·8	5·4	16·0	5·4
part-time		5·5	1·8	4·3	1·5	3·9	1·3
Service industries	6-9	187·4	62·1	196·1	66·5	197·6	67·0
Male full-time		81·9	27·1	83·5	28·3	81·8	27·8
part-time		7·7	2·6	9·4	3·2	9·8	3·3
Female full-time		50·7	16·8	53·4	18·1	57·5	19·5
part-time		47·0	15·6	49·8	16·9	48·5	16·5
All industries and services	0-9	301·7	100·0	294·7	100·0	294·7	100·0
Male full-time		166·7	55·2	157·1	53·3	154·1	52·3
part-time		8·9	3·0	10·6	3·6	10·8	3·7
Female full-time		72·3	24·0	71·7	24·3	76·3	25·9
part-time		53·9	17·9	55·3	18·8	53·4	18·1

[1] Excludes the self-employed and members of Her Majesty's Forces; employees in temporary employment are included but are not separately identified in the census; part-time workers are defined as those working not more than 30 hours a week.

[2] The district is defined in terms of ward boundaries as at 1981.

[3] Percentage of all industries and services total.

Pay (Leeds)

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the maximum and minimum hourly basic rates of pay recorded in the Leeds office of the Manpower Services Commission from advertised posts in *(a)* the manufacturing sector and *(b)* the service sector.

Mr. Nicholls: The information provided relates to vacancies available on Wednesday 8 November 1989 and is as follows:

Hourly pay rates

	Manufacturing		*Services*	
	£	*years*	*£*	*years*
Minimum	1·25	16-20	1·20	16
Maximum	6·25	—	5·20	—

The table is based upon information from jobcentres in the Leeds local authority area. It excludes vacancies quoting only weekly, monthly or annual pay rates, which could not be adjusted to give reliable hourly equivalents.

Disablement Assistance

Mr. Litherland: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if the contents of the draft document on the Government's internal review of employment assistance to disabled adults have been finalised; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The review is at an advanced stage. The contents of the consultative document which will follow the review have not yet been finalised. However, the document will be published as soon as possible.

The review is taking a comprehensive look at the framework for services for people with disabilities in the labour market in the 1990s.

Sheltered Employment

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the major issues discussed by the Employment Department sheltered employment consultative group over the last three years and all major achievements of the group during that time.

Mr. Eggar: This is a consultative body which exists to provide a forum for the exchange of views between the Department and organisations with an interest in the sheltered employment programme. The major issues discussed by the consultative group since 1986 have included:

A review of the provision of equal opportunity policies within the programme leading to the development and dissemination of a model policy.

Annual sheltered employment statements to the National Advisory Council for the Employment of Disabled People (NACEDP) 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88.

Sheltered employment research.

Numbers supported in the sheltered employment programme.

Results of the sheltered placement scheme earnings survey.

Net Exchequer costs of sheltered employment.

NACEDP working party report on the review of the Tomlinson principles.

Sheltered employment finance.

Health and safety in the sheltered employment programme.

Retention of approved workers with significantly reduced output.

Issues relating to the procurement of work, and the priority suppliers scheme.

Evaluation of the sheltered placement scheme.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the membership of the Employment Department sheltered employment consultative group and, where applicable, the organisation represented by each member.

Mr. Eggar: The current membership of the sheltered employment consultative group is listed as follows:

Organisation Represented:	*Member*
Department of Employment	Mr. D. J. Sullivan (Chairman)
Liaison Groups of Sheltered Workshop Managers	Mr. M. J. Barratt Mr. P. E. Linton
Local Authority Associations	
Associations of County Councils	Councillor Mr. W. Minto
Association of Metropolitan Authorities	Mr. J. Gallagher Councillor Mrs. J. Watts
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities	Mr. A. J. H. MacNish Mr. D. Morrison
Remploy Ltd.	Mr. M. Daymond Mr. T. A. True
Trade Unions	
National League of the Blind and Disabled	Mr. M. A. Barrett
General and Municipal Workers' Union	Mrs. P. Turner

Small Firms Service

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the Government's small firms service is able to offer expert advice on the particular problems of starting and running a small business which are faced by *(a)* women and *(b)* people with disabilities.

Mr. Eggar: Yes. The small firms service offers information, advice and guidance on business to all groups of people.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Eggar: There were 1,342 oral and 1,600 written parliamentary questions asked of this Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Eggar: To provide the information in the form requested would involve manual scrutiny of some 3,000 replies to parliamentary questions; I regret, therefore, that it could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

It is, however, this Department's practice to supply substantive answers to questions wherever possible.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Eggar: This information is not recorded centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. Friend has not refused to answer any parliamentary questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Brewing and Tobacco Industries

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what was the number of people employed in the brewing industry in England and Wales *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* five years ago;

(2) what was the number of people employed in the tobacco industry in England and Wales *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* five years ago.

Mr. Nicholls: The only information available for these industries is the employees in employment estimates from the census of employment in 1984 and 1987, as follows:

Employees in employment in England and Wales

	Brewing industry[1] *(thousand)*	*Tobacco industry*[2] *(thousand)*
September 1984	47·7	20·3
September 1987	38·4	13·7

[1] Group 427 of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.
[2] Group 429 of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

Average Industrial Wage

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average industrial wage paid in the three most recent years for which figures are available, in Britain and in each EEC country.

Mr. Nicholls: The information on a consistent basis as compiled by the Statistical Office of the European Communities is as follows:

Average Gross Hourly Earnings of Manual Workers in Manufacturing Industries (1) in national currencies.

	April 1986	*April 1987*	*April 1988*
Belgium (BFr)	298	304	308
Denmark (DKr)	73·67	80·78	86·38
Germany (DM)	16·51	17·40	18·25
Greece (Dr)	347	383	451
France (FFr)	38·55	40·17	41·68
Ireland (£IR)	4·35	4·59	4·83
Italy (2) (Lr)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Luxembourg (LFr)	335	345	n.a.
Netherlands (Fl)	17·00	17·35	n.a.
Portugal (Esc)	200	239	272
Spain (Pts)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
United Kingdom (£)	3·86	4·09	4·38

Notes:
(1) NAC Classification of Manufacturing Industries
(2) Latest available data for Italy are for October 1985, 7,802 Lira/hour
n.a. not available

Free Telephone Calls

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the cost of allowing everybody registered as seeking work in rural areas to be eligible for free telephone calls to their local jobcentre irrespective of the Telecom charges incurred.

Mr. Eggar: The information to enable an estimate to be made is not available.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will estimate the number of people seeking work who are denied access to a local free telephone facility from their home village to the nearest jobcentre because the Telecom telephone line routing is so indirect as to make the call liable to long distance rates.

Mr. Eggar: This information is not available.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he proposes to take to achieve a free telephone facility to the local jobcentre for everyone wishing to contact their local jobcentre.

Mr. Eggar: There are no plans to introduce a national free phone facility into jobcentres, although this has been introduced in some parts of the country where access to the jobcentre may be difficult and costly.

Employment Training

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on British Oxygen's refusal to continue to participate in employment training.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* British Oxygen Company (BOC) is still participating in employment training by providing high-level training under the higher technical national training (HTNT) arrangements. The effect of BOC's decision not to renew its contract as a training manager under ET is the loss of only 30 places, none of which was filled at the time of the withdrawal, and which will be made good by increasing places with other providers in the area.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the most recent details of *(a)* the number of filled places on the 23 large company employment training schemes listed in the *Official Report*, 6 July, column *275*, *(b)* any changes to the maximum number of places allocated for each of these schemes and *(c)* which of those schemes have since withdrawn from employment training.

Mr. Nicholls: The following table updates to 29 September 1989 the details of the 23 large company employment training schemes listed in the *Official Report*, 6 July, column *275*.

The "No. of places allocated" column shows, in brackets, the changes to the figures from 26 May 1989, as listed in the *Official Report*.

None of the schemes listed has withdrawn from employment training.

Company	Number of places allocated at 29 September 1989		Places filled at 29 September 1989
J. Jarvis and Sons	1,310	(−1,186)	1,160
J. Laing Construction	2,181	(+3)	1,554
Henry Boot Construction	495	(−74)	222
Invicta Training (Grand Metropolitan Training)	1,105	(+390)	147
Martin James	650	(+10)	552
Geo. Wimpey	437	(−110)	404
Mowlem	305	(−100)	128
Comet PLC	354	(−20)	51
Pilkington	230	(−40)	181
Ferranti	152	(−63)	92
Mill Garages Ltd.	170	—	173
Tower Radio Ltd.	130	(−120)	93
Portals Engineering Ltd.	250	—	241
Marley Extrusions Ltd.	200	—	Nil
Ryder Ltd.	165	(+15)	194
Team Greyfriars Ltd.	380	(+180)	155
John Lawrence Group	100	(−50)	37
ICI	100	—	83
Sumlock Business Service	60	(−30)	36
R and D Associates	125	—	139
Simon Engineering	110	—	63
Coastline Ltd.	70	—	114
Strategic Marketing (International Ltd.)	100	—	88

Unemployment Benefit

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many unemployment benefit claims offices in Wales have reduced the amount of time granted for first time claims interviews.

Mr. Eggar: An average time of 40 minutes is allowed for each new claim interview.

Labour Statistics

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest unemployment figures for the borough of Eastleigh, Hampshire, and for the same period in each of the last six years; and, in each case, what percentage of the total available work force the unemployed represented.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The following information is available from the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants in Eastleigh local authority district in September 1989 and in each September for the preceding six years. These figures are slightly affected by the change in the compilation of the count in March 1986 to reduce over-recording and changes in benefit regulations in September 1988 affecting young people aged under 18.

Percentage rates of unemployment are not calculated for local authority districts.

Local Authority District of Eastleigh

September	Unemployed Claimants
1983	2,690
1984	2,892
1985	3,028
1986	3,247
1987	2,602
1988	1,657
1989	1,110

Employment and Training Schemes

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the cost of all Government training schemes and special employment measures in 1979-80 and 1988-89; and what was the average number of participants in each year.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* Records are kept on the basis for the standard financial year for accounting for Government expenditure, which runs from 1 April to 31 March.

The Department of Employment Training Agency (ex-MSC, ex-Training Commission) spent the following on training schemes including special employment measures for the number of participants shown:

	£ million	Participants
1979-80	524·3	316,000
1988-89	2,764·3	1,229,000

Expenditure figures shown are at cash prices. Figures for 1979-80 are taken from the appropriation accounts, and for 1988-89 are provisional and unaudited.

Number of "participants" is the number of people who entered training during the year. This includes a number of people who may have started for a second or subsequent time.

The figures include the following programmes:

Training for the Needs of Industry
Training for the Needs of Individuals
Improving Training Effectiveness and Efficiency
Training Opportunities Scheme
Skillcentre Training
Community Programme
Occupational Training
Adult Training
Industrial Training Organisations
Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
Non Advanced Further Education
Youth Training Scheme
Employment Training
Scientific and Technical Equipment in Schools (STEPS)
Special employment measures included in 1979-80
Community Enterprise Programme

Youth Opportunities Programme
Community Industry
Job Creation Programme
and all related administration costs net of receipts.

YTS

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many YTS places were available for employed status trainees in July 1987, 1988 and 1989; and how many of those places were filled by September of each year.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* YTS places are not allocated according to employment status. The total numbers of young people in training on YTS at the end of September 1987, 1988 and 1989 are given below together with the percentage with employed status.

Date	*Total in training*	*Employed status*	*Percentage of total*
End September 1989	411,600	107,000	26
End September 1988	435,600	75,000	17
End September 1987	428,000	47,000	11

Unemployment

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the level of unemployment among construction industry workers in England and Wales at the latest date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no analysis of the monthly unemployment count by occupation or industry. However, the labour force survey provides estimates of the previous industry category of unemployed people. The table shows the estimates of unemployed persons whose previous job was in the construction industry (as defined by ILO definitions), as estimated by the latest survey of 1988.

Unemployed persons (ILO definitions) whose previous job was in the construction industry

1988 Labour Force Survey	*Number of unemployed*
England	128,000
Wales	12,000
Merseyside Metropolitan County	10,000

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many were unemployed in the Liverpool travel-to-work area at the latest date; and what was the figure five years ago.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The information is available in the Library. In September 1989 the number of unemployed claimants in the Liverpool travel-to-work area was 66,636, compared with 106,825 in September 1984, a fall of 40,189 or 37·6 per cent. over the past five years. The comparison is slightly affected by the change in compilation of the count in March 1986 to reduce over-recording and by the change in September 1988 due to the changes in benefit regulations affecting young people under 18 years of age.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the latest figure for unemployment in *(a)* Merseyside and *(b)* Liverpool.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The information is available in the Library. In September 1989, the latest available date, the number of unemployed claimants was 87,293 in the county of Merseyside and 66,636 in the Liverpool travel-to-work area.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of unemployed in Liverpool under 21 years at the latest date; and what were the figures five years ago.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The information requested is not available. In July 1989, the latest available date, the number of unemployed claimants aged 18 to 24 in the Liverpool travel-to-work area was 22,086, compared with 37,617 in July 1984, a fall of 15,531 or 41·3 per cent. The comparison is slightly affected by the change in compilation of the count in March 1986 to reduce over-recording and by the change in September 1988 due to the changes in benefit regulations affecting young people under 18 years of age.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the unemployed figure among workers in the Liverpool construction industry at the latest available date.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* There is no analysis of the monthly unemployment count by occupation or industry. However, the labour force survey provides estimates of the previous industry category of unemployed people. The table shows the estimates of unemployed persons whose previous job was in the construction industry (as defined by ILO definitions), as estimated by the latest survey of 1988.

Unemployed persons (ILO definitions) whose previous job was in the construction industry
(1988 labour force survey)

	Number of unemployed
England	128,000
Wales	12,000
Merseyside Metropolitan County	10,000

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of *(a)* Government Bills and *(b)* private Members' Bills where the Committee stage was taken on the Floor of the House in each Session since 1970.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The list, excluding Consolidated Fund Bills and Finance Bills, is as follows:

(Bills are listed in order of committal; Government Bills are asterisked)

1970-71
*National Insurance (Old Persons and Widows Pensions and Attendance Allowance)
*International Monetary Fund
*Education Handicapped Children
*Fiji Independence
*Harbours (Amendment)
*Income and Corporation Taxes
*Family Incomes Supplements
*Town and County Planning Regulations (London) (Indemnity)
*Expiring Laws (Continuance)
*Air Corporations
*Industrial Relations
*Atomic Energy Authority
*Guardianship of Minors
Administration of Estates
*Mr. Speaker King's Retirement
*Vehicles Excise
*Hydrocarbon Oil (Customs and Excise)
*Coinage
*Attachment of Earnings
*National Savings Bank
*Rent (Scotland)
Dangerous Litter
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
*Medicines
*Housing
*Hijacking
*Diplomatic and Other Privileges
*Statute Law (Repeals)

1971-72
*National Insurance Regulations (Validation)
*Sierra Leone Republic
*Island of Rockall
*Airports Authority
*Civil List
*Ministerial and other Salaries
*Electricity
*Local Employment
*Summer Time
*Transport (Grants)
*European Communities
*Maintenance Orders (Reciprocal Enforcement)
*Northern Ireland
Trade Descriptions
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries
Carriage by Railway
Sunday Cinema
*Deposit of Poisonous Waste
*Road Traffic
*Northern Ireland (Temporary Provisions)
*Betting and Gaming Duties
National Insurance (Amendment)
Sunday Theatre (No. 2)
Civil Evidence
Defective Premises
Harbours, Piers and Ferries (Scotland)
*Parliamentary and other Pensions
*Sri Lanka Republic
*Town and Country Planning (Scotland)
*Contracts of Employment
*Land Charges
*National Debt
*Poisons

1972-73
*Counter Inflation (Temporary Provisions)
*Northern Ireland (Financial Provisons)
*Pensioners and Family Income Supplement Payments
*Northern Ireland (Border Poll)
*Costs in Criminal Cases
Protection of Wrecks
*Northern Ireland Assembly
*Northern Ireland (Constitution)

1973-74
*Channel Tunnel (Initial Finance)
*Fuel and Electricity (Control)
*International Sugar Organisation
*Northern Ireland Constitution (Amendment)
*Representation of the People
*Pensions (Increase)
*Charlwood and Horley

1974
*National Insurance
*Lord High Commissioner (Church of Scotland)
*Contingencies Fund
*Ministers of the Crown
*Northern Ireland
*Road Traffic

1974-75
*Pensioners' Payments
*National Theatre
*Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions)
*Offshore Petroleum Development (Scotland)
*Referendum
Hearing Aid Council (Extension)
*Malta Republic
*British Leyland

1975-76
*Northern Ireland (Loans)
*Civil List
*Drought
*Endangered Species (Import and Export)
*Industry (Amendment)
*Moneylenders (Crown Agents)
*OECD Support Fund
Protection of Birds (Amendment)
Solicitors (Scotland)
*Seychelles
*Trinidad and Tobago Republic
*Valuation and Rating (Exempted Classes) (Scotland)
*Water Charges

1976-77
*Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries
*National Insurance Surcharge
*Fishery Limits
*Scotland and Wales
Roe Deer (Close Seasons)
*Job Release
*Representation of the People
*Agricultural Holdings (Notices to Quit)
*British Airways Board
*Statute Law (Repeals)
*New Towns
*Restrictive Trade Practices
*Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) (Amendment)
*Rent
*Protection from Eviction
*National Health Service

1977-78
*Pensioners' Payments
*Scotland
*Wales
*Finance (Income Tax Reliefs)
*European Assembly Elections
*Commonwealth Development Corporation
*Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions)
*Education (Northern Ireland)

Protection of Children
*Refuse Disposal (Amenity)
Internationally Protected Persons
Local Government Act 1974 (Amendment)
Education (Northern Ireland)
Theatres Trust (Scotland
*Solomon Islands
*Tuvalu
*Oaths
*Export Guarantees and Overseas Investment
*House of Commons (Administration)
*Parliamentary Pensions
*Representation of the People
*Adoption (Scotland)
*National Health Service (Scotland)
*Interpretation
Import of Live Fish (Scotland)
*Employment Protection (Consolidation)
*Statute Law (Repeals)

1978-79
*House of Commons (Redistribution of Seats)
Films
*Price Commission (Amendment)
*Vaccine Damage Payments
Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons)
*Confirmation to Small Estates (Scotland)
*Customs and Excise Management
*Customs and Excise Duties (General Reliefs)
*Alcoholic Liquor Duties
*Hydrocarbon Oil Duties
*Matches and Mechanical Lighter Duties
*Tobacco Products Duty
*Excise Duties (Surcharges or Rebates)
Licensing (Amendment)
*Independent Broadcasting Authority
Criminal Evidence
*Capital Gains Tax
*Agricultural Statistics
*Wages Councils
*Electricity (Scotland)
*Administration of Justice (Emergency Provisions) (Scotland)
*Legal Aid
*Representation of the People
*Arbitration
*Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation)
*Leasehold Reform
*Carriage by Air and Road
*Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas
*Exchange Equalisation Account
*International Monetary Fund
*Prosecution of Offences

1979-80
*Kiribati
*Pensioners' Payments and Social Security
*European Assembly (Pay and Pensions)
*European Communities (Greek Accession)
*Shipbuilding
*Southern Rhodesia
Representation of the People
*Papua New Guinea, Western Samoa and Nauru (Miscellaneous Provisions)
*Isle of Man
*Justices of the Peace
*Sale of Goods
*Zimbabwe
*Residential Homes
*Child Care
*Foster Children
Import of Live Fish (England and Wales)
*Reserve Forces
Gaming (Amendment)
*Highlands and Islands Air Services (Scotland)
*Slaughter of Animals (Scotland)
*New Hebrides
*Consular Fees
*Police Negotiating Board
*National Health Service (Invalid Direction)
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
*Port of London (Financial Assistance)
Licensing (Amendment) (No. 2)
Coroners
*Iran (Temporary Powers)
*Gas
*Sea Fish Industry
*Magistrates' Courts
*Education (Scotland)
*Water (Scotland)
*Solicitors (Scotland)
*Criminal Appeal (Northern Ireland)
*Highways
*Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions)
*Overseas Development and Co-operation
*Limitation
*Statute Law Revision (Northern Ireland)
*Tenants' Rights Etc. (Scotland)

1980-81
*European Assembly Elections
*Social Security (Contributions)
*Anguilla
*Gas Levy
*Redundancy Fund
*Iron and Steel (Borrowing Powers)
*House of Commons Members' Fund and Parliamentary Pensions
Disabled Persons (No. 2)
Food and Drugs (Amendment)
*English Industrial Estates Corporation
*Film Levy Finance
*National Film Finance Corporation
*Public Passenger Vehicles
*Judicial Pensions
Licensing (Alcohol, Education and Research)
*Armed Forces
*Statute Law (Repeals)
Transport Act 1962 (Amendment)
Local Government and Planning (Amendment)
Matrimonial Homes and Property
*Animal Health
*Criminal Justice (Amendment)
Licensing (Amendment)
*Representation of the People
*Belize
*Friendly Societies
*Betting and Gaming Duties
*Acquisition of Land
*Compulsory Purchase (Vesting Declarations)
*New Towns
*Trustee Savings Banks
*Broadcasting

1981-82
*Social Security (Contributions)
*New Towns
*Canada
*Travel Concessions (London)
*Agricultural Training Board
*Industrial Training
Copyright Act 1956 (Amendment)
*Northern Ireland
*Civil Aviation
*Iron and Steel
*Aviation Security
*Insurance Companies
*Industrial Development

1982-83
*Commonwealth Development Corporation
*Electricity (Financial Provisions) (Scotland)
*National Insurance Surcharge
*Lands Valuation Amendment (Scotland)
*Pig Industry Levy
*Representation of the People
Licensing (Occasional Permissions)
Level Crossings
British Nationality (Falkland Islands)

*British Fishing Boats
*Matrimonial Incomes
*Mental Health
*Pilotage
*Social Security and Housing Benefits
Coroners' Juries
Pet Animals Act 1951 (Amendment)
*Importation of Milk
*Litter
Road Traffic (Driving Licences)
*County Courts (Penalties for Contempt)

1983-84
*Local Authorities (Expenditure Powers)
*International Monetary Arrangements
*Companies (Beneficial Interests)
*Medical
*Car Tax
*Value Added Tax
*Oil Taxation
*Restrictive Trade Practices (Stock Exchange)
*Town and Country Planning
*Tourism (Overseas Promotion) (Scotland)
*Pensions Commutation
Road Traffic (Driving Instruction)
Education (Amendment) (Scotland)
*Local Government (Interim Provisions)
*County Courts
*Mental Health (Scotland)
*Food
*Public Health (Control of Disease)
*Registered Homes
*Dentists
*Parliamentary Pensions etc
*Roads (Scotland)
*Capital Transfer Tax
*Rent (Scotland)
*Foster Children (Scotland)
*Building

1984-85
*Elections (Northern Ireland)
*Friendly Societies
*Local Government
*Representation of the People
*Hong Kong
*Brunei and Maldives
*Town and Country Planning (Compensation)
*London Regional Transport (Amendment)
Hospital Complaints Procedure
*Companies Consolidation (Consequential Provisions)
*Companies
*Company Securities (Insider Dealing)
*Business Names
*Interception of Communications
*Cinemas
Hill Farming
Agricultural Training Board
*Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment)
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
Rent (Amendment)
*Rating (Revaluation Rebates) (Scotland)
*European Communities (Finance)
*Further Education
*Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc)
Wildlife and Countryside (Service of Notices)
*Housing
*Housing Associations
*Housing (Consequential Provisions)
*Landlord and Tenant
*Weights and Measures

1985-86
*Northern Ireland (Loans)
*European Communities (Spanish and Portuguese Accession)
*Education (Amendment)
Marriage (Wales)
*Australia
Industrial Training
Protection of Military Remains
Drainage Rates (Disabled Persons)
Prevention of Oil Pollution
Highways (Amendment)
*Agricultural Holdings
*Armed Forces
Gaming (Amendment)
Road Traffic Regulation (Parking)
*Statute Law (Repeals)
*European Communities (Amendment)
*British Shipbuilders (Borrowing Powers)
Marriage (Prohibited Degrees of Relationship)
*British Council and Commonwealth Institute Superannuation
*Insolvency
*Company Directors Disqualification
*Public Trustee and Administration of Funds
*Family Law
*Parliamentary Constituencies

1986-87
*Advance Petroleum Revenue Tax
*Teachers' Pay and Conditions
*Local Government Finance
*Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses)
Licensing (Restaurant Meals)
Deer
Gaming (Amendment)
*Immigration (Carriers' Liability)
*Pilotage
*Norfolk and Suffolk Broads
Prescriptions (Scotland)
*Chevening Estate
Local Government Act 1986 (Amendment)
Billiards (Abolition of Restrictions)
*Territorial Sea
*Diplomatic and Consular Premises
*Housing (Scotland)
*Parliamentary and other Pensions
*Consumer Protection
*Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust

1987-88
*British Shipbuilders (Borrowing Powers)
*Dartford-Thurrock Crossing
*Income and Corporation Taxes
Consumer Arbitration Agreements
Malicious Communications
Land Registration
Companies (Audit Committees)
*Rate Support Grants
*Road Traffic (Consequential Provisions)
*Road Traffic Offenders
*Road Traffic

1988-89
*Petroleum Royalties (Relief) and Continental Shelf
*Security Service
*Official Secrets
Control of Smoke Pollution
Common Land (Rectification of Registers)
International Parliamentary Organisations (Registration)
Weights and Measures (Amendment)
*Representation of the People
Dangerous Dogs
Licensing (Amendment)
*Extradition
*Continental Shelf
*Prisons (Scotland)
*Statute Law Repeals
*Opticians

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of occasions in each of the parliamentary Sessions from 1970 to 1989 when *(a)* the House of Lords carried amendments to (i) private Members' Bills and (ii) Government Bills against the advice of the Government, *(b)* such amendments were accepted by the Government

in the House of Commons and *(c)* the amendments were reversed in the House of Commons and (1) the reversal was accepted by the House of Lords or (2) the House of Lords insisted on their amendments.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Members' Allowances

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list in pounds sterling the amount of *(a)* office costs allowance and *(b)* second home allowance unclaimed by hon. Members in the years 1988-89.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Estimate provision included in the House of Commons Members' salaries etc vote for *(a)* office costs allowance (OCA) and *(b)* additional costs allowance (ACA) in 1988-89 was £14,683,000 and £5,174,000 respectively.

The total claimed and paid to Members in the year in respect of OCA was £14,568,579·36, and for ACA £5,384,650·53.

It is not the practice to provide detailed listings of individual Members' claims.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Earthquakes

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by location and date, the number of earthquakes that have been recorded during the last 10 years; on what seismographic scale; what damage was recorded; and what research is being carried out by his Department into earthquakes.

Mr. Needham: Northern Ireland has not recorded any earthquakes above magnitude 2·5 on the Richter scale in the last 10 years. Research into earthquakes in the United Kingdom is carried out by the British Geological Survey.

Childhood Leukaemia

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by year to date, and by health authority, the number of incidences of childhood leukaemia that have been reported following the Chernobyl accident; and what was the reported number in 1980 and 1986.

Mr. Needham: The information is not available in the precise form requested. Such data as are available are given in the table.

Notification of leukaemia (0 to 14 years)

	1980	*1986*	*1987*
Health and Social Services Boards			
Eastern	5	4	4
Northern	4	5	2
Southern	1	0	7
Western	7	2	5
NORTHERN IRELAND TOTAL	17	11	18

Mulder Milk Quota

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he hopes to redistribute to farmers in Northern Ireland the excess of the Mulder milk quota.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Additional milk quota of 15 million litres has been allocated to eligible Northern Ireland applicants under the terms of EC regulations 764/89 and 1033/89. There are no proposals for further allocations.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Cope: A total of 310 oral and 1,207 written questions to date.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Cope: Fifteen, up to and including 13 November 1989.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics and *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Cope: The information is as follows:

	Number
Not available	[1]76
Not separately recorded	4
Not centrally recorded	8
Not recorded in Government Statistics	0
Could only be provided at disproportionate cost	[1]48
Total	106

These figures are for the 1988-89 Session up to 13 November 1989.
[1] 30 questions were not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost, and these are counted in both figures.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Cope: This information is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Cope: A number of published statistical series have been discontinued since 1979. I will write to the hon. Member with details.

AIDS

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have died from AIDS in the Province in the last three years.

Mr. Needham: Over the past three years seven people in the Province are known to have died from causes associated with AIDS.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the number of people suffering from AIDS in the Province at the latest available date.

Mr. Needham: At 10 November 1989 a total of 14 people in the Province had been diagnosed as having AIDS.

Tobacco Industry

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the number of employed persons in the tobacco industry in the Province *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* five years ago.

Mr. Needham: I will write to the hon. Member.

Brewing Industry

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the number of people employed in the brewing industry in the Province *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* five years ago.

Mr. Needham: I will write to the hon. Member.

Local Enterprise Development Unit

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total amount of financial aid offered by LEDU to companies in each district council area in Northern Ireland in each of the five years since the unit was formed.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 6 November 1989]:* The amount of financial aid offered by LEDU since 1971 to companies, including individuals setting up in business for the first time, in each district council area is set out in the table. Cumulative figures only are available for the years 1971 to 1976.

£s

Area	1971 to 1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	Total
Antrim	0	9,580	37,816	105,477	229,801	56,425	140,251	57,635	676,888	801,512	694,974	1,200,805	1,765,219	2,057,950	7,834,333
Ards	188,624	89,785	139,122	104,992	34,042	154,051	193,685	669,361	685,809	383,993	528,136	906,417	26,952	486,418	4,591,387
Armagh	165,908	15,100	72,598	56,625	54,105	133,450	58,864	259,460	388,217	808,923	891,808	669,784	1,419,643	1,107,095	6,101,580
Ballymena	161,834	0	159,855	203,897	111,245	136,480	99,145	261,611	488,179	341,116	606,839	371,020	470,322	459,941	3,871,484
Ballymoney	163,116	0	198,625	57,022	76,718	197,981	42,988	253,047	167,500	199,125	133,799	169,506	63,430	82,264	1,805,121
Banbridge	80,153	0	37,149	126,698	2,142	87,120	104,786	281,146	112,753	184,133	158,587	152,826	32,427	198,883	1,558,803
Belfast	444,600	84,913	81,136	108,875	411,005	886,854	956,761	1,639,636	2,841,035	3,252,705	3,735,499	4,208,874	5,616,889	7,533,131	32,781,913
Carrickfergus	246	0	18,700	3,765	56,640	118,023	106,507	121,828	496,208	1,017,359	647,375	775,714	864,202	661,003	4,887,570
Castlereagh	22,124	8,400	12,330	104,750	35,440	7,114	26,836	57,875	14,720	21,288	48,647	237,888	198,474	22,292	818,178
Coleraine	359,221	203,221	80,938	67,966	196,633	42,348	197,204	149,260	431,846	772,899	642,142	366,859	568,905	262,504	4,341,946
Cookstown	239,378	111,985	62,622	166,924	27,855	127,901	109,036	594,213	363,640	243,892	273,398	432,877	321,957	864,895	3,940,573
Craigavon	654,060	82,807	285,302	419,958	369,653	611,366	522,305	710,203	1,126,983	1,505,009	1,060,716	1,790,986	811,825	1,181,633	11,132,806
Down	260,951	0	112,338	34,292	643,708	63,357	334,604	513,377	712,364	480,085	1,236,379	1,856,561	2,994,709	3,146,016	12,388,705
Dungannon	951,152	83,685	556,340	518,039	477,487	474,734	342,954	665,765	754,598	1,331,782	2,119,553	1,583,124	1,063,023	3,470,147	14,412,383
Fermanagh	549,058	92,411	444,471	154,055	91,472	142,564	427,925	449,192	410,266	780,131	735,016	696,707	451,447	883,918	6,308,632
Larne	37,558	0	0	41,300	71,093	1,935	269,532	160,322	82,530	557,229	460,196	179,518	273,778	388,358	2,523,349
Limavady	82,719	47,886	85,831	77,375	268,923	92,300	62,907	132,180	137,411	117,679	156,664	113,092	84,198	439,051	1,898,216
Lisburn	179,240	950	131,282	38,233	65,683	284,096	399,943	746,534	892,865	762,364	653,929	900,071	348,185	758,819	6,162,194
Londonderry	543,911	329,413	136,510	282,004	98,283	200,773	97,438	716,019	962,674	1,429,405	2,281,324	1,957,033	2,909,413	3,102,322	15,046,522
Magherafelt	337,729	37,935	123,102	280,029	142,375	14,268	339,785	237,116	735,194	1,025,341	1,708,291	601,612	776,824	709,057	7,067,858
Moyle	19,048	0	3,480	1,000	54,627	3,947	26,895	238,367	7,850	95,125	46,500	57,945	40,000	59,295	654,079
Newry and Mourne	822,219	275,098	340,295	857,879	522,413	531,091	452,856	470,406	839,420	1,113,683	1,204,587	989,030	521,054	2,108,969	1,106,900
Newtownabbey	246,615	33,378	128,038	316,133	56,447	230,643	424,550	676,779	463,343	449,301	805,102	1,251,537	530,201	865,495	6,477,562
North Down	99,072	15,188	159,925	234,801	353,250	127,676	74,051	624,829	680,130	875,626	1,102,075	528,942	55,056	625,674	5,556,295
Omagh	423,429	50,781	214,085	56,162	166,920	74,875	54,948	104,507	271,828	173,601	635,061	700,189	408,723	771,032	4,106,141
Strabane	99,997	3,325	661,679	27,750	35,930	103,748	59,134	464,772	481,411	302,415	706,380	247,425	1,364,294	563,094	5,121,354

Industrial Development Board

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total amount of financial aid offered by the Industrial Development Board to companies in each district council area in Northern Ireland, in each of the years since 1982.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 6 November 1989]:* The table details the selective financial assistance offered to and accepted by companies in each district council area.

£000s

District Council Area	1982-83 1 September 1982 —31 March 1983	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	Total
Antrim	207	2,488	1,977	1,120	5,339	3,354	6,773	21,258
Armagh	NIL	170	1,066	763	2,174	1,137	599	5,909
Ballymena	508	7,632	5,293	2,049	4,201	8,324	1,310	29,317
Ballymoney	NIL	NIL	2,565	718	4,970	1,330	450	10,033
Banbridge	270	1,898	493	498	1,325	154	775	5,413
Belfast	2,273	9,419	18,228	3,539	19,838	5,907	13,288	72,492
Carrickfergus	140	402	1,511	225	136	641	2,189	5,244
Castlereagh	67	1,054	4,728	2,196	1,893	1,315	2,859	14,112
Coleraine	851	4,433	5,547	4,102	1,065	3,717	1,182	20,897
Cookstown	2,370	136	742	265	186	NIL	332	4,031
Craigavon	5,133	11,104	18,341	10,696	9,728	10,736	4,511	70,249
Down	49	352	1,328	3,168	1,163	811	3,830	10,701
North Down	NIL	671	1,240	872	1,860	1,380	554	6,577

District Council Area	1982-83 1 September 1982 —31 March 1983	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	Total
Dungannon	551	737	6,060	1,945	2,566	4,453	1,291	17,603
Fermanagh	540	2,538	4,905	1,023	418	4,691	4,033	18,148
Larne	NIL	486	16,122	157	9,774	1,721	3,763	32,023
Limavady	1,890	136	644	1,149	1,294	2,408	NIL	7,521
Lisburn	1,145	2,046	3,187	2,728	2,417	1,205	33,321	46,049
Derry	954	8,600	11,989	23,855	4,358	6,366	7,877	63,999
Magherafelt	NIL	3,495	1,706	843	655	965	1,075	8,739
Moyle	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	678	NIL	NIL	678
Newtownabbey	30,734	3,315	5,436	3,978	28,273	10,176	14,412	96,324
Newry and Mourne	476	5,526	4,526	1,793	459	7,278	1,248	21,306
Ards	325	3,714	6,335	3,584	1,045	8,717	1,105	24,825
Omagh	NIL	2,491	1,848	128	878	2,270	NIL	7,615
Strabane	NIL	1,455	7,135	385	2,587	7,908	NIL	19,470

Information in respect of research and development and marketing development grants is not readily available by district council area and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost. However, annual figures of grants offered are:

	Research and development £'000s	Marketing development £'000s
1982-83[1]	1,900	—
1983-84	7,000	—
1984-85	6,100	—
1985-86	6,400	1,087
1986-87	8,300	1,921
1987-88	7,800	2,075
1988-89	7,800	3,180

[1] 1 September 1982 to 31 March 1983.

Terrorism Suspects (Interviews)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to ensure tighter safeguards for persons in custody on suspicion of terrorist offences; and if he will introduce video and sound recording of all interviews of such persons and immediate access to legal advice.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 6 November 1989]:* Existing arrangements and the scope for further safeguards, including the question of video and sound recording of interviews with terrorist suspects in custody, are kept under regular review. The rights of persons suspected of terrorist offences introduced under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1987 will be considered by Lord Colville in his review of the Emergency Provisions Acts. A guide to the exercise of the emergency powers by the security forces in Northern Ireland, including the detention and questioning of suspects in custody under the terrorism provisions, will be published shortly.

Scheduled Offences

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give separately for *(a)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary and its Reserve, *(b)* the Ulster Defence Regiment and *(c)* the Regular Army, the number of members convicted of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland, on and off duty, in each year for which figures are available.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Arms Thefts

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table showing how many legally held firearms were stolen during 1988 from *(a)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve, *(b)* the Ulster Defence Regiment, *(c)* the British Army, and *(d)* civilians; and if he will give a breakdown of weapons stolen as (i) bullet firing, (ii) shotguns, (iii) air weapons, and (iv) miscellaneous, including blank firing weapons, muzzle loading weapons and antique weapons.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* The information is as follows:

Legally held firearms stolen during 1988

	RUC/ RUCR	UDR	Regular Army	Civilians
Bullet firing	9	1	4	16
Shotguns	0	0	0	54
Air weapons/ Miscellaneous[1]	0	0	0	13

[1] Miscellaneous includes: Blank Firing Weapons, Muzzle Loading Weapons, Antique Weapons, Tranquiliser Guns and Starting Pistols.

Rural Action Project

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when an announcement will be made anent the provision of core funding for the continuation of the Rural Action Project (Northern Ireland) as a rural development agency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* It has now been agreed that Government will provide funding to allow the Rural Action Project to continue until the end of the current financial year. This will enable the Government to draw on the expertise and knowledge developed over the period of the project in tackling rural problems.

TDG

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he received prior to his decision to refuse an application for £2 million in development grant by Messrs. TDG.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* None.

Firearms Certificates

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hand gun target shooters in Northern Ireland have been *(a)* granted a new firearms certificate and *(b)* granted a variation on a replacement weapon, in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Chief Constable of the RUC has informed me that the information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pistols held on firearms certificates in Northern Ireland are of a type and specification which are used for target shooting in *(a)* smallbore and *(b)* fullbore; and what were the numbers five and 10 years ago.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Chief Constable of the RUC has informed me that the number of pistols and revolvers held on firearm certificates is:

Type	*At 31 October 1989*	*At 31 December 1984*
Smallbore pistols/revolvers	468	478
Fullbore pistols/revolvers	509	471

No information is available to show the position at 31 December 1979.

Pistol Target Shooting

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his estimate of the number of people in Northern Ireland who practise the sport of pistol target shooting; what were the number five years ago and 10 years ago; and, of these, what is his estimate as to how many are involved in (i) smallbore and (ii) fullbore shooting.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Chief Constable of the RUC has informed me that the current number of people claiming membership of authorised clubs for pistol target shooting is 1,433. It is not possible to differentiate between those people engaged in smallbore and those people engaged in fullbore pistol target shooting. However, there are 11 smallbore pistol shooting clubs and eight fullbore pistol shooting clubs. The information requested for earlier years is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Unemployment

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to reduce the level of unemployment in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The industrial development agencies (IDB and LEDU) are actively pursuing new job opportunities both from existing Northern Ireland companies and new inward investment. In the last financial year the agencies were particularly successful and achieved a record 10,657 jobs promoted with inward investment of 1,856 jobs. In addition, at August 1989, some 31,300 people were benefiting from special employment and training measures.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to reduce unemployment among construction workers in the Province; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* Government expenditure is contributing substantially to the relatively high level of output by the Northern Ireland construction industry in which unemployment has fallen over the past three years.

Coronary Disease

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the implications of the new general practitioner contract for preventive care against coronary disease.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Government attach great importance to the promotion of good health and prevention of ill health such as coronary heart disease. Patients will be offered more advice on how to avoid illness and simple checks on, for example, blood pressure will be available routinely as a result of the new contract for general medical practitioners which places greater emphasis on these aspects of health care. Family doctors will also be encouraged through the new remuneration system to provide clinics on the prevention of heart disease, smoking cessation, alcohol control and stress management.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Incomes

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will update the answer on incomes given to the hon. Member for Birkenhead of 11 July, *Official Report*, column *442* to include data for 1986, and if available, data for 1987.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: No. The next edition of "Households Below Average Income: A Statistical Analysis", will cover the years 1981, 1985 and 1987. Publication is planned for around the turn of the year. Similar analysis for 1986 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Elderly People

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he intends to take to increase financial support over and above the income support limits announced in his recent upratings statement to allow elderly people in private residential and nursing homes to meet the full costs of their care.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The income support limits are set at levels which cover the fees in a majority of homes. It has never been the intention that social security payments should be available to cover whatever fees homes choose to charge, and we have no plans to change that.

Sick Pay

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish his latest estimates of *(a)* the number of employees covered by occupational sick pay

schemes, expressed also as a percentage of the total workforce, *(b)* the number of male employees covered by occupational sick pay schemes, expressed also as a percentage of the male workforce, and *(c)* the number of female employees covered by occupational sick pay schemes, expressed also as a percentage of the female workforce.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Out of a total work force of 22 million it is estimated that 20 million (91 per cent.) are covered by an occupational sick pay scheme. These comprise about 11 million men (90 per cent. of the male work force) and 9 million women (92 per cent. of the female work force). This information is based on the report on occupational sick pay schemes by IFF Research Ltd for the Department of Social Security, published in November 1988.

Income Support (Seaham and Peterlee)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what number of people living within the Seaham and Peterlee Department of Social Security areas are in receipt of income support.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: In August 1989 the income support live load totals in the Department's local offices at Peterlee and Seaham were 6,588 and 3,007 respectively.

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action, which included a number of cases where benefit payments had ceased but other action was continuing. Data are provisional and subject to amendment.

Disability Allowances

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when Her Majesty's Government propose to undertake a full review of disability allowances.

Mr. Scott: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 13 November at columns *51-52*.

Blind and Partially Sighted Students

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last met representatives from the Royal National Institute for the Blind to discuss the financial position of blind and partially sighted students and students loans; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: Student loans are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

We have made clear our intention to preserve the benefit entitlement of certain students in vulnerable groups, including disabled students. The regulations to give effect to this will be subject to consultation.

Widow's Pension

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the average length of time now taken to process a claim for a widow's pension; what is the target set by the Department for processing such claims; and what steps are being taken to speed up the process.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I regret that information is not yet available on the average length of time taken to process a claim for widow's pension.

The Department has recently reinforced its standing instructions to re-emphasise the need for urgency in dealing with all claims for widow's benefit.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, pursuant to his statement of 25 October, *Official Report*, column 844, he will explain the criteria he used in stating that 3,000 deaf-blind people should now qualify for mobility allowance.

Mr. Scott: It is a broad estimate, derived from available information including representations made to us on behalf of this group, of the number of deaf-blind people within the age limits for mobility allowance who do not currently qualify for it.

Department of Social Security Offices

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he intends to take to ensure that his Department's offices in England and Wales provide privacy for their clients both at the initial reception area and in interview rooms.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: All local offices have private interview rooms and are expected to publicise their existence. Offices are encouraged to install privacy screens at reception points and a rolling programme of installations is in hand.

Income Support Claimants

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many claimants of income support listed at each local office in Birmingham have had their name and address sent by the local office to the community charge registration officer, at the latest convenient date.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: This information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Disability Benefits

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he is taking to ensure that groups of disabled people who do not qualify for existing benefits will be taken into account in his review of disability benefits.

Mr. Scott: We recently announced a range of measures which will extend social security provision to people who do not qualify for existing benefits. We will announce further proposals within the next few months, seeking to do more to help many disabled people who at present do not receive mobility allowance or attendance allowance.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will be taking evidence from independent experts in developing his proposals for disability benefits.

Mr. Scott: I refer the right hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 13 November at columns *51-52*.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what plans he has to consult disability organisations on his plans to reform the system of disability benefits;

(2) whether he will be consulting disabled people and those organisations representing their interests when

drawing up his proposals for changing the balance and structure of social security provision for people with disabilities.

Mr. Scott: I refer the right hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Don Valley (Mr. Redmond) and the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) on 23 October at columns *341-42*.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he expects to bring forward proposals following the OPCS report on disability, to improve the structure of disability benefits.

Mr. Scott: We will announce our proposals within the next few months.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he last met representatives of the disability benefits consortium.

Mr. Scott: On 4 May 1989.

Personal Pension Schemes

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what factors account for the difference between the estimates of the revenue forgone by the national insurance fund in respect of minimum contributions to personal pension schemes in 1989-90 given in replies to the hon. Member for Derby, South on 17 July, *Official Report*, column *42*, and 30 October, column *51*.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: My reply to the hon. Member of 30 October at column *51* provided the latest estimate of revenue forgone in respect of personal pensions—that is, the rebate together with the incentive. The reply given to the hon. Member on 17 July at column *42* related only to the cost of the rebate for personal pensions. Information about the cost of the incentive (covering both personal pension and occupational schemes) had been provided to her on 4 July at column *140*. The direct comparison between the replies of 17 July and 30 October is that revenue foregone in respect of personal pensions in 1989-90 is now estimated to be £1,860 million instead of £2,050 million. The Government Actuary revised his figures in the light of new estimates about the numbers and earnings levels of those taking out a personal pension.

National Insurance

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the most recent estimate of the cost to the national insurance fund of the 2 per cent. inducement under section 7 of the Social Security Act 1986 in 1989-90 and 1990-91; and how much of the cost relates to payments in respect of 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90, respectively.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to her on 30 October at column *51*. The figure of £720 million relates to £350 million for 1987-88 and £370 million in 1988-89. The Government Actuary will be producing his latest estimates in his forthcoming report on the contributions rerating order.

Benefits

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the latest date on which recipients of the following benefits will receive transitional addition *(a)* invalid care allowance, *(b)* income support with the disability premium, *(c)* invalidity benefit, *(d)* income support with severe disability premium and *(e)* severe disablement allowance.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Income support normal transitional protection reduces as the claimants total benefit income under the new scheme catches up with that under the former supplementary benefit scheme either at the annual uprating or through changes in circumstances. This protection is also lost on breaks in entitlement. The length of time for which individuals will need protection cannot be predicted, but after the annual uprating in April 1990 it is estimated that nearly 95 per cent. of all claimants will not require protection. Special transitional protection does not normally reduce at all; it is uprated annually.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Since 1979 the Department has discontinued the collection and publication of statistics only in respect of those benefits which have either been abolished, for example:

Death Grant
Injury Benefit

or replaced by new benefit arrangements such as:

Supplementary Benefit (Income Support)
Family Income Supplement (Family Credit)
Non Contributory Invalidity Pension (Severe Disablement Allowance)

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89;

(2) how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89;

(3) how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided at disproportionate cost;

(4) what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Information on the cost of replying to questions tabled to this Department or on questions receiving answers that information was not available or held centrally, is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

In the 1988-89 Session up to 8 November 442 oral and 2,273 written questions have been tabled for reply by this Department. None has been refused an answer, but some have been transferred to other Departments for reply. Less than 2 per cent., 45 in total, have received answers that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Industrial Diseases

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) what steps he is taking to ensure that those entitled to claim disablement benefit under regulation 13 of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries and Diseases) Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations 1986 do so before it is too late;

(2) when he decided to repeal regulation 13 of the Social Security (Industrial Injuries and Diseases) Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations 1986; on what date that decision was made public; and on what date it will be implemented;

(3) whether he will amend the industrial injuries regulations to preserve the right of persons suffering from vibration white finger and other industrial diseases to claim disablement benefit where the onset of the disease occurred before 1 October 1986 and the person concerned was unable to make an earlier claim because of a justifiable lack of appropriate knowledge.

Mr. Scott: A decision in principle to repeal this regulation was made in December 1988. The amending regulation was laid before Parliament on 11 October 1989 and was to come into force on 1 November 1989. A second amending regulation, deleting this amendment, was laid and came into force on 1 October 1989. I took this action to allow time for further consideration of the matter. My final decision will take into account the representations I have received. Meanwhile, it is open to those who wish to do so to claim under regulation 13 of the 1986 regulations.

Disablement Services

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he intends publishing the results of his Department's review of services for people with disabilities.

Mr. Scott: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security announced on 25 October a range of significant measures to give extra help for disabled people. We shall announce within the next few months further proposals to improve the balance and structure of disability benefits.

Pensioners' Benefits

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many pensioners were expected to become entitled to income support and housing benefit, respectively, as a result of the changes in benefit rates on 9 October; and what information is available regarding the number who claimed.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Our estimates were that 60,000 pensioners would newly qualify for income support as a result of the changes introduced in October, and that 40,000 pensioners would newly qualify for housing benefit.

During the first three months of the publicity campaign, from July to September, some 140,000 income support awards were made for pensioners. This compares with a total of 49,300 awards in the previous three months. Similar information on housing benefit is not yet available.

Pensions (EC)

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a comparative table of standard basic pensions paid in the EEC countries to those who worked for national average wages, converted into European currency units by employing the puchasing power standard.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The details of how each EC member state calculates its principal state pension benefits are contained in the Department's annual publication, "Tables of Social Benefit Systems in the European Communities", the 1989 issue of which is available in the Library.

Most member states do not have a standard basic pension. Pensions are usually related to individual earnings; no EC average annual earnings figures are available from which it would be possible to provide the information requested.

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Riddick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps he is taking to implement the joint Department of Health/Department of Social Security review of the potential for relocating headquarters' work away from London.

Mr. Newton: I have accepted the findings of the review that a substantial amount of my Department's work in London should be relocated. Having carefully considered the review team's report, a copy of which is being placed in the Library, I have concluded that 650 posts, mostly relating to the work of the new benefits agency, which is planned to come into existence in April 1991, should be located in Leeds. The office of the chief adjudication officer, with its 150 posts currently located in Southampton, will also move to Leeds. I expect these moves to take place from late 1991 into 1992.

I welcome the parallel announcement by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Health that some 1,000 posts from his Department's headquarters will also be moving to Leeds.

Lone Parents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if, pursuant to his statement of 25 October, *Official Report*, column *843*, he will provide a breakdown of the 95,000 lone parents who will benefit from *(a)* the increase in the lone parents premium for housing benefit/community charge benefit and *(b)* the increase in the earnings disregard for lone parents claiming housing/community charge benefit.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The number of gainers of housing benefit and community charge benefit from the increase in the lone parent premium announced for April 1990 is around 80,000. The majority of these also gain from the increase in the earnings disregard which will take effect in October 1990. In addition, we estimate that a further 15,000 lone parents will float on to benefit as a result of the increase in the earnings disregard.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish for the last 10 years the number of *(a)* unmarried and *(b)* separated mothers on social security, the numbers of children for which they are responsible and the numbers of mothers with maintenance payments in operation against the fathers of the children.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer Wednesday 8 November 1989]:* The information requested is set out in the table.

Unmarried, separated and divorced mothers receiving Supplementary Benefit/Income Support; numbers of children and numbers with maintenance payments.

	Unmarried mothers	*Separated mothers*	*Divorced mothers*
1979			
Claimants	89,000	101,000	100,000
Children	116,000	194,000	194,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	29,000	59,000	71,000
1980			
Claimants	99,000	99,000	106,000
Children	130,000	187,000	199,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	33,000	52,000	71,000
1981			
Claimants	144,000	120,000	120,000
Children	147,000	226,000	220,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	33,000	62,000	80,000
1982			
Claimants	134,000	134,000	127,000
Children	177,000	249,000	234,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	34,000	61,000	79,000
1983			
Claimants	144,000	145,000	140,000
Children	186,000	271,000	248,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	32,000	61,000	76,000
1984			
Claimants	168,000	157,000	141,000
Children	228,000	291,000	247,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	35,000	56,000	69,000
1986			
Claimants	211,000	176,000	163,000
Children	282,000	330,000	287,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	37,000	56,000	74,000
1987			
Claimants	247,000	176,000	178,000
Children	334,000	338,000	311,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	38,000	52,000	73,000
1988			
Claimants	286,000	191,000	185,000
Children	400,000	384,000	335,000
Claimants with maintenance payments	35,000	49,000	73,000

Notes:

1. Figures are for mothers with children on Supplementary Benefit or Income Support. The table only includes mothers with children under age 16. It does not include the small number of families whose only dependent children were age 16 or over. This is because (until the passage of the Social Security Act 1989) liability of absent parents to maintain their children for Social Security purposes ended at age 16.
2. Divorced mothers are included for completeness.
3. The figures for claimants with maintenance payments include any case where there is a Court Order or voluntary payment whether for mother or child.
4. Source: Annual Statistical Enquiries for the relevant years. There was no Enquiry in 1985.

THE ARTS

Drama in Wales

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will publish in the *Official Report* for *(a)* 1987-88 and *(b)* 1988-89 the percentage of Welsh Arts Council grants to drama in Wales which was allocated to (i) South Glamorgan and (ii) West Glamorgan.

Mr. Luce: The information requested is as follows:

	South Glamorgan Per cent.	*West Glamorgan Per cent.*
1987-88	33·5	2·0
1988-89	33·4	2·4

Historically, the majority of Welsh drama companies has been based in South Glamorgan; the Welsh Arts Council's allocations reflect that. However, six of the 11 organisations based in South Glamorgan tour extensively outside the county. The percentages relate to grants to companies and take no account of smaller specific grants such as new writing commissions and touring assistance.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Office in 1988-89.

Mr. Luce: To date, the figures for this Session are as follows:

	Numbers
Oral	255
Priority written	109
Ordinary written	94

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Luce: None.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Luce: This information is a matter of public record in the columns of the *Official Report*.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the cost to his office of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Luce: Based on the estimated average cost of answering oral and written questions, which currently stands at £90 per oral and £54 per written, the cost to date has been *(a)* £22,590 and *(b)* £10,530.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether his office has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Luce: The Office of Arts and Libraries regularly collects statistics; some of these are available to the public.

SCOTLAND

Inside Intelligence (Costs)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Linlithgow of 18 October, *Official Report*, column *131-2*, when he now expects to announce the full costs of the proceedings relating to "Inside Intelligence."

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Neither the Secretary of State for Scotland nor the Lord Advocate knows when the accounts of expenses of other parties to the legal action The Lord Advocate *v* The Scotsman Publications and Others relating to the book "Inside Intelligence" will be taxed by the appropriate authorities.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations he has had with the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board regarding the management and ownership of the nuclear power stations in Scotland after vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the statement made to the House of 9 November at col. 1184 by my right hon. and learned Friend.

Salmon Licensing

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland from which bodies and individuals he has received representations on the draft proposals for a salmon dealers' licensing scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Representations have been sent or copied to this Department by the following:

Association of Chief Police Officers (Scotland)
Association of Scottish District Salmon Fishery Boards
Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust Ltd.
Atlantic Salmon Trust
British Field Sports Society
British Retailers Association
Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Fishmongers' Company of City of London
Garnock Valley Angling Protection Association
Highlands and Islands Development Board
Highland Regional Council
Institute of Fisheries Management (Scottish Branch)
National Farmers' Union of Scotland
Nith District Salmon Fishery Board
Nith Fishings Improvement Association
Ross and Cromarty District Council
Salmon and Trout Association
Salmon and Trout Association (Scottish Council)
Salmon Net Fishing Association of Scotland
Scottish Anglers National Association
Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Scottish Landowners' Federation
Scottish Salmon Farmers' Marketing Board Ltd.
Scottish Salmon Growers Association Ltd.
Scottish Sports Council
Shetland Fish Processors' Association
Shetland Salmon Farmers' Association
Shetland Smokehouse Ltd.
Sutherland District Council
Western Isles Islands Council

Some other bodies have indicated an intention to submit comments which have not been received to date.

All the representations we receive, and any relevant comments on the scheme proposed for England and Wales (which is designed to be compatible with the scheme proposed for Scotland) are being given full consideration. Final decisions on the schemes will be announced in due course.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Rifkind: *(a)* 608 and *(b)* 2,646.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

(2) how many written Parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rifkind: A total of 322, of which 297 were in the categories listed by the hon. Member; 92 where the information *(a)* was not available, 29 *(b)* not separately recorded, 144 *(c)* not centrally recorded, 13 *(d)* not recorded in Government statistics, and 19 *(e)* could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Rifkind: Such costs cannot be separated from the total administrative costs of my Department.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Rifkind: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department intends to use the actual poll tax figures charged by local authorities in the current year in Scotland in calculating transitional poll tax relief; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. The intention behind the proposed transitional relief scheme is to compensate personal community charge payers who have experienced significantly large increases in payments as

against their previous rate bill as a result of the change from domestic rates to the community charge. For this purpose charges estimated to exclude the effects of local authorities' decisions to expand services this year provide a more realistic basis for establishing entitlement to relief.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what financial provision he has allocated to cover the administrative cost of implementing the transitional poll tax relief scheme in Scotland including the recalculation of rebates.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has made it clear that local authorities will be reimbursed for the reasonable costs they incur in administering the community charge transitional relief scheme. The costs will clearly depend upon the details of the scheme and we are at present discussing those with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidance has been given to local authorities as to the issue of a seven-day notice prior to the issue of a 14-day notice to all those liable for the community charge who have not indicated in writing that they wish to pay by lump sum.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: None. The requirements relating to the issue of seven and 14-day letters are set out in schedule 2 to the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Act 1987.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps local authorities must take to remind community charge payers of their liability before invoking legal action for arrears or non-payment in the case of those paying by *(a)* monthly instalments and *(b)* other than monthly instalments.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Paragraph 7(2) of schedule 2 to the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended lists the requirements which a levying authority has to meet before the sheriff will on application grant a summary warrant authorising recovery of arrears of community charge. These include a requirement for the authority to have given written notice requiring paying of the amount due within a period of 14 days after the date of the giving of the notice. The levying authority can apply for a summary warrant in respect of any amount of community charge arrears. If, however, it wishes to recover the full annual amount from a person who is paying, or should be paying, by monthly instalments, they must first have followed the procedures set out in paragraph 4(9) of schedule 2 to the 1987 Act. This provides that the full amount becomes payable by such a person if they are three monthly payments in arrears, if they have been given written notice that failure to pay their arrears within seven days of the sending of the notice will lead to the full annual amount becoming payable, and if they have failed to pay their arrears within those seven days.

AIDS

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people have died from AIDS in Scotland in the last three years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The numbers of deaths in Scotland from AIDS reported to the communicable diseases (Scotland) unit in each of the last three years are as follows:

Year	*Number*
1987	12
1988	14
[1]1989	27

[1]To end October.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of people suffering from AIDS in Scotland at the latest available date.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: According to the latest available returns made to the communicable diseases (Scotland) unit there were 62 AIDS cases in Scotland at 31 October 1989.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what was the number of people employed in the brewing industry *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* five years ago;

(2) what was the number of persons employed in the Scotch whisky industry *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* five years ago.

Mr. Lang: The latest available information on employment in these industries in Scotland comes from the 1987 census of employment. The table shows for each industry the total number of employees in employment in September 1984 and September 1987.

Employees in employment in Scotland

Industry	*September 1984*	*September 1987*
Spirit Distilling and Compounding	16,900	15,300
Brewing and Malting	4,200	4,800

Source:
1984 Census of Employment.
1987 Census of Employment.

Tobacco Industry

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total number of employed persons in the tobacco industry in Scotland *(a)* at the latest date and *(b)* five years ago.

Mr. Lang: It is not possible to give information about the employment of the tobacco industry in Scotland without disclosing confidential information relating to individual firms.

Rent Officers

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library copies of guidance given to rent officers regarding their functions.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government do not issue guidance to rent officers, who are statutorily independent and are therefore guided primarily by statute. In carrying out their functions relating to housing benefit subsidy, they are guided by the provisions of the Rent Officers (Additional Functions) (Scotland) Order 1989 (SI

1989 No. 578(S65), as amended by SI 1989 No. 1446(S116)). Detailed working arrangements are an internal matter for the rent registration service.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the number of appeals against determinations by local authorities so far in the current year.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In the period from 1 April to 31 October 1989, local authorities in Scotland requested redetermination in 74 cases for which rent officers had made a determination in connection with their functions relating to housing benefit subsidy.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the total numbers of determinations made by rent officers since 10 April.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In the period from 1 April to 31 October 1989, rent officers in Scotland made 21,642 determinations in respect of rents referred to them by local authorities in connection with their functions relating to housing benefit subsidy.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the total number of rent officers in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: At 31 October 1989, there were 36 rent officers (including senior rent officers) employed in Scotland, and one vacant post.

Students' Allowances

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what arrangements he is making for the payment of increased tuition fees for courses of higher education on behalf of students who receive awards under the students' allowances scheme.

Mr. Lang: The Government announced on 6 July 1989 that the maximum tuition fee for most courses for which awards are made under the students' allowances scheme will be £1,675 from the 1990-91 academic year. In order to ensure that public funds are not paid in advance of need, I have decided that tuition fees will be paid in termly instalments. The arrangements will replace the present systems, which vary among universities, grant-aided colleges and other establishments of higher education. Scottish universities and grant-aided colleges will be consulted about detailed arrangements for termly fee payments. The Universities Funding Council and the Scottish Education Department will adjust the profile of their recurrent grant instalments to institutions to take account of the change.

A similar change will be made in the payment of increased fees to local authority further education colleges at a later date.

I have also considered what fee levels would be appropriate for reimbursement through the students' allowances scheme for courses where a student spends at least a year away from an institution—for example, students on "thick" sandwich courses. In these cases, the costs to the institution are usually less during the year away than for the main part of the course. I have decided that the maximum fee reimbursed in such cases should be half the standard tuition fee.

Hospices

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will make a statement defining Government policy on the funding of hospices.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 10 November, 1989]:* We regard the hospice movement as making an important contribution to health care. This valuable contribution is already acknowledged by the use made by some health boards of hospice services on a contractual basis and by the assistance given by other boards by way of financial support or provisions of supplies.

We wish to develop and foster the co-operation that already exists and to encourage the creation of new and stronger links between the public sector and independent hospices. We wish particularly to ensure that the development of hospices, and the improvement and extension of their services is not hampered by lack of funds. For this purpose with effect from 1 April 1990 we shall be increasing significantly the financial support available to the hospice movement to ensure that all hospices obtain support from public funds of up to 50 per cent. of their running costs.

We shall also be looking at other ways in which the hospice movement might be supported in the future in the light of the implementation of the policies which we have set out in our White Paper "Working for Patients".

Raspberries

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what impact he assesses the proposed European Community trade measures with Poland and other eastern European states will have in the raspberry-growing area of Tayside.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* No final decisions have yet been taken on the proposed measures. I can assure my hon. Friend that the position of the raspberry growing area of Tayside is being taken into account in our consideration of this matter.

Rhu Narrows

Mr. Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to reply to the letter sent in July from the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North's constituent, Dr. Malcolm Kerr, regarding Rhu Narrows.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The proposal by the Property Services Agency, on behalf of the Ministry of Defence, to widen Rhu Narrows adjacent to the Clyde submarine base at Faslane was advertised in the local press in July and persons who wished to express a view on the proposal were invited to write to my Department. The letter to which the hon. Member refers was one of a number of standard format letters received objecting to the proposal. It is not normal practice to reply individually to those who have made representations in this manner. Copies of the letter of 12 October announcing my right right hon. and learned Friend's decision to allow this development to proceed were sent to the major parties involved in the proposal and an announcement was made in the press.

Dr. Kerr raised this matter with my Department on 2 November and a reply was issued on 8 November advising him of my right hon. and learned Friend's decision.

Torness

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make a statement about the anticipated availability of generating capacity at Torness power station during the coming winter;

(2) if he will make a statement about the delay in completing the store for dismantling irradiated fuel at Torness power station.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* These are operational matters for the South of Scotland Electricity Board. I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about the delay in obtaining approval from the nuclear installations inspectorate for the refuelling equipment at Torness power station.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* Progress with the commissioning of refuelling equipment at Torness is regulated by a series of formal consents required under the conditions of the nuclear site licence issued by the nuclear installations inspectorate on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive.

I am advised by the NII that consents for the early stages of commissioning have been granted, the inspectorate having satisfied itself on the safety case made by the South of Scotland Electricity Board. The SSEB is expected to apply shortly for consent to progress to the next stages which cover the loading of more fuel into the reactors.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: The Treasury is currently reviewing the location of its activities under the policy which my right hon. Friend the then Paymaster General announced on 31 March 1988 at c. *610-11*. No decisions have yet been taken.

Economic Growth

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what evidence he has that the liberalisation of trade and payments has led to an increase in the rate of economic growth in the United Kingdom; and if he will provide illustrative figures for the growth in gross domestic product less North sea oil and gas together with changes in the balance of payments.

Mr. Ryder: There is a vast economic literature on the benefits of free trade. I refer the hon. Gentleman to a recent survey article by J. David Richardson, published in the spring 1989 issue of *OECD Economic Studies*, and its extensive bibliography.

Manufacturing Output (France and Italy)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has on the effect that membership of the ERM has had on manufacturing output in France and Italy; and if he will publish figures showing for each the average annual rate of growth in output in 1959 to 1969, 1969 to 1979 and 1979 to 1988.

Mr. Ryder: ERM membership is only one of many possible influences on manufacturing output in France and Italy. Following is the further information requested on manufacturing output.

Manufacturing output growth
Average annual percentage change

	1960-69	*1969-79*	*1979-88*
France	5·8	3·6	0·4
Italy	7·3	3·6	1·5

Federal Reserve Bank

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what powers the Federal Reserve Banks in the United States have which it is not proposed to accord to any comparable institution in the member states under the Delors proposals.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend's statement in the House on 2 November at columns 490-91 which made clear the Government's fundamental objection to the Delors approach beyond stage 1.

Income Distribution

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* any evidence he has on income distribution per head in *(a)* the United States of America and *(b)* the European Community.

Mr. Ryder: Data on income distribution in the United States are published by the United States Department of Commerce in "Survey of Current Business" and "Statistical Abstract of the United States." Data on GDP per head in EC member states are published by the OECD in "Annual National Accounts Vol. 1"; and more recent estimates can be derived from the OECD's "Main Economic Indicators". Data on GDP per head in individual regions of member states are published by the CSO in *Regional Trends*.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* any evidence he has on the percentage change in income per head between states in the United States of America over approximately the past 30 years and as the national average.

Mr. Ryder: Data on personal income per head in the United States, both the national average and figures for individual states, are published by the United States Department of Commerce in "Survey of Current Business" and "Statistical Abstract of the United States".

EC Budget

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish his latest estimate of the amount of the net United Kingdom contribution to the EEC budget and the actual figures for 1988.

Mr. Ryder: The Government's latest estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the European

Community budget was published in the "Statement on the 1989 Community Budget" (Cm. 680, April 1989). The estimated outturn figure for 1988 was £1,362 million. A revised estimate of the United Kingdom's net payments to European Community institutions for the financial years 1989-90 to 1992-93 will be published in the forthcoming Autumn Statement.

Government Data Network

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what Government Departments, agencies or other bodies not currently using the Government data network he assesses as possible participators in the network.

Mr. Ryder: The Government data network is available to all central Government Departments and agencies and, subject to approval of the GDN management board, their use of the network is actively encouraged.

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his policy on inviting tenders to the expansion of the network from companies not currently contributing to the Government data network.

Mr. Ryder: The Government data network is provided under contract by Racal Data Networks Ltd. as a service and it is the responsibility of the contractor to tailor the network to meet user demands. The contract requires open systems connection to international standards to ensure that users have the widest possible choice of suppliers for systems which use GDN for connections. Those standards also give the contractor the widest choice of equipment and every inducement to use the most cost-effective technology as it becomes available. It is the intention that development of the network to carry value added data services will assure a competitive network in those services.

Income Tax

Sir Hal Miller: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he estimates the loss of revenue in the fiscal year 1989-90 would be if the standard rate of income tax had been reduced to 20 per cent., all other tax rates and thresholds remaining unchanged; and, to make up that loss of revenue, at what income scale the threshold of the 40 per cent. higher rate tax would have to be set.

Mr. Lilley: The direct revenue cost in a full year, at 1989-90 income levels, of a 5p reduction in the basic rate of tax would be to reduce income tax receipts by £7·5 billion. This reduction would be approximately revenue-neutral if at the same time the basic rate limit was reduced from £20,700 taxable income to £9,000.

Estimates exclude the effects on capital gains tax and possible behavioural effects. They are based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and are provisional.

Bingo Duty

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many visits were made to non-profit making clubs in connection with bingo duty by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise officers in each month of the current parliamentary Session.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* This question could be answered only at the cost of disproportionate time and effort.

European Central Banks

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the number of individual members of the board of the European system of central banks as proposed in the Delors report.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Delors report does not specify the number of individual members of the board of its proposed European system of central banks.

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is envisaged that the decisions of the board of the European system of central banks as proposed in the Delors report will be made by means of weighted voting.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Delors report says that:

"modalities of voting procedures would have to be provided for in the Treaty".

Exchange Rate Mechanism

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what restrictions remain on the movement of capital and currencies within each European Economic Community nation which participates in the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system; and what assurances have been given about their removal.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* A number of Community countries still retain some form of exchange control. The capital liberalisation directive requires most member states to remove all remaining restrictions on movements of capital within the Community by 1 July 1990. Ireland, Spain, Greece and Portugal are required to comply with the directive by the end of 1992, although the last two (which do not participate in the exchange rate mechanism) may be permitted a further extension to the end of 1995.

Child Tax Allowance

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be *(a)* the administrative cost and *(b)* the total cost of a child tax allowance, assuming all taxpayers with children received an allowance equivalent to £7·25 per week.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* A child tax allowance of £1,510 per child, which would be worth about £7·25 a week to a basic rate taxpayer, would cost about £3¾ billion in a full year at 1989-90 levels of income. Administrative costs would depend on the details of the scheme.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Oil Seed Rape

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research his Department is undertaking or commissioning into developing less allergy-inducing strains of oil seed rape.

Mr. Curry: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) on 9 November (*Official Report*, column 782).

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research or investigation his Department has made into the health problems connected with the oil seed rape crop; what finance has been allocated to such projects; and what plans he has to develop further the recent research financed by Angus district council and Ninewells hospital.

Mr. Curry: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health on 8 November (*Official Report*, column *684-85*).

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what conclusions his Department has reached on the results of the oil seed rape research project funded by Angus district council and Ninewells hospital on the relationship betwen oil seed rape and allergies, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Health on 8 November (*Official Report*, col. *684-85*).

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has yet completed his study of the potential for relocating his Ministry's offices outside London and the south-east; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The detailed study my officials are carrying out on the potential for further relocation of headquarters' work is nearing completion, but it is too early to make a statement on the outcome.

Nitrates

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the techniques and practices encompassed within the term food agricultural practice in his Department's guidance on nitrate sensitive areas.

Mr. Curry: The good nitrate practice advisory measures for the nitrate scheme areas are still being finalised, but they will concentrate on the need to avoid excessive or untimely applications of nitrogen fertiliser, including animal manure, and to minimise both the ploughing up of grassland and bare land during the autumn leaching period.

Milk

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals to introduce legislation in respect of the milk marketing board.

Mr. Curry: I have no such plans at present.

Brown Hares

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether there are any regulations governing the farming of brown hares; and if there are any such breeding farms in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Curry: As far as I know brown hares are not farmed in this country.

Straw

Mr. Paice: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what encouragement and assistance his Department is giving to industry into researching and developing ways in which straw can be successfully incorporated into the manufacture of new products or utilised in other ways.

Mr. Maclean: My Department funds research, totalling £706,000 in 1989-90, into alternative uses for straw, including work on incorporation techniques, straw handling and packaging equipment and use of straw as a fuel. In addition, grants are available for the supply and installation of straw burning fires and furnaces.

Tourism

Mr. Speller: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *546*, when he assumed responsibility for restaurants and the catering aspects of tourism.

Mr. Curry: My right hon. Friend assumed responsibility within Government for the interests of the food industry which includes the non-residential catering sector on 24 July 1989, on his appointment as Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment remains responsible for hotels and tourism, including the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourist Board.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Curry: My Department collects and publishes statistics on a wide range of topics. It regularly carries out reviews to ensure that statistics are relevant to current needs. As part of this process, some statistics which were collected and published in 1979 have been discontinued; some new ones have been collected and published and there have been improvements in others.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89;

(2) how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89;

(3) how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost;

(4) what was the cost to his Ministry of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Curry: As of 13 November, 592 oral and 2,457 written questions had been asked of the Minister of

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food during the 1988-89 parliamentary Session. The other information requested is not readily available.

Irradiated Seafood

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has received any representations concerning the import of prawns and shell fish which have been irradiated; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: Allegations on this subject have been made on a number of occasions, but hard information is limited to one known case in 1985 that was dealt with by the Dover health authority.

Lead-contaminated Food

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when his veterinary service first received reports that cows were dying as a result of eating lead-contaminated feedstuffs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Bovine carcases, aged six and nine months, were submitted to two veterinary investigation centres (Starcross, Devon and Sutton Bonington, Leicestershire) on Monday 30 October for post-mortem examination. As a result of these post-mortem examinations and subsequent laboratory tests, lead poisoning was diagnosed as the cause of death.

Follow-up inquiries included the examination of environmental and feed samples and the presence of lead in the feed eaten by these two animals was confirmed by Sutton Bonington on 31 October and by Starcross on 1 November.

At the same time our legal department was notified by the Dutch authorities of a danger to animal health due to a specified consignment of contaminated feed being exported to two companies in the United Kingdom.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many cattle have died since the end of September from the farms where lead-contaminated feed was used; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* As of Monday 13 November 1989, lead poisoning has been diagnosed by the Veterinary Investigation Service on carcases and other material submitted from 12 premises where feed contaminated with lead has been fed. It is understood that 32 cattle have died on these premises.

DEFENCE

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Neubert: The Ministry of Defence is currently examining a number of relocation possibilities, primarily from London and the south-east. The advantages of transferring defence work to the north-west, as to other regions, will continue to be borne in mind when evaluating potential candidates for relocation.

Nuclear Missiles

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the effect on delivery of the first United Kingdom Trident missile of the result of the recent test launches in the United States of America.

Mr. Alan Clark: I refer to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish on 26 October 1989 column *560*.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce his decision on a nuclear stand-off missile; which weapons are being considered; and what criteria will influence his decision.

Mr. Alan Clark: We are continuing to study both United States and French options. The details of the requirements which the studies are taking into account are classified. It is not yet possible to forecast when a decision may be taken.

Conventional Arms

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards the conventional armaments planning system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The United Kingdom has strongly supported the trial of the conventional armaments planning system from its outset early last year. The trial has recently been completed and the NATO conference of national armaments directors (CNAD) debated the results of this first trial cycle of the system at their meeting last month. The NATO council, reinforced by Ministers, will be meeting later this week to review the system and consider the recommendations put to it by the CNAD. It would not be appropriate to prejudge the outcome of that meeting.

Battlefield Deception

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what importance he attaches to systems of battlefield deception; and what systems are available for deployment by the armed forces.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The importance of battlefield deception will vary according to the tactical circumstances at the time. A wide variety of methods and equipments are available to aid in this task.

NATO Command and Control Systems

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has given consideration to the consequences for the Royal Air Force when the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation air command and control system is implemented; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The NATO air command and control system (ACCS) is intended to enhance NATO's air defences by establishing a co-ordinated and interoperable system for the command and control of all air operations in Allied Command Europe. The United Kingdom strongly supports this objective, to which the modernisation of our air defence system under the improved United Kingdom air defence ground environment and related programmes will make a major contribution.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy towards the co-ordination of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation command control and communications systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The requirements for NATO infrastructure-funded command control and communications systems, as in the case of other infrastructure expenditure, are stated and co-ordinated by the major NATO commanders. The United Kingdom plays a full part in the scrutiny and control of NATO infrastructure expenditure through the established NATO mechanisms.

Air Defence Ground Environment System

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects that the improved United Kingdom air defence ground environment system will be fully implemented; and what is the total cost of implementing it.

Mr. Alan Clark: We expect that the IUKADGE will be fully operational in the early 1990s. The estimated cost of the complete programme at current prices is £500 million.

Procurement

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the details of all procurement projects on which money has been spent in the last five years, but which have not directly resulted in equipment being adopted by the armed services.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

ROF, Blackburn

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to ensure that the arrangements for the physical security of the royal ordnance factory in Blackburn are sufficient to protect the work carried out on Ministry of Defence contracts.

Mr. Neubert: As stated in paragraph 22 of Cm. 9422, the Ministry of Defence continues to monitor security arrangements at all Royal Ordnance plc's factories, including Blackburn. For reasons of security I am not prepared to give details of those arrangements.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: No record is kept of the cost of answering parliamentary questions.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested is not held centrally. However, an approximate record is available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: None.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 10 December 1986 at columns *206-7*.

In 1987, two tables were discontinued in volume II of the Statement on the Defence Estimates, concerning student numbers in selected service colleges and information about service children's education. In volume II of the 1988 Statement on the Defence Estimates, data about the activities of the Meteorological Office were discontinued.

Very little information is collected by the Ministry of Defence purely for statistical publications; most of the data which are published are based on internal administrative records. There has been no significant reduction in the collection of statistics since 1979.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, following the decision of the United States Defence Intelligence Agency to reduce its estimate of the Soviet Union stockpile of chemical weapon agent from 300,000 tonnes to less than 75,000 tonnes, he will make it his policy to review Her Majesty's Government's own assessment of this data; and if he will publish any resulting revision in the estimate in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Government's position regarding the size of Soviet stocks of chemical weapons remains as expressed in paragraphs 219-220 of the Statement on Defence Estimates 1989 (Cm. 675-I).

Loan Service Personnel

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1), pursuant to his answer of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *542*, what were the ranks of those service personnel who served on loan or secondment in Chile in 1986;

(2), pursuant to his answer of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *542*, what are the numbers and ranks of those service personnel currently on loan or secondment in the Sudan.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Specific details about personnel serving on loan or secondment are generally in confidence between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the country concerned.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *542*, what are the ranks of those loan service personnel currently stationed in Belize.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information requested is as follows:

Army
Two Lieutenant Colonels
Two Majors
Two Warrant Officers

Navy
One Commander
One Warrant Officer
One Chief Petty Officer

Air Force
One Squadron Leader
One Flight Lieutenant
One Chief Technician

This information updates that published in the eighth report of the House of Commons defence Committee (HC 624, Session 1987-88).

Honduras

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any British service personnel have visited Honduras in an official capacity at any time in the last 10 years, excepting those personnel attached to the British embassy in Honduras.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Official visits by military personnel to Honduras are infrequent and have recently included port visits by the survey ships HMS Beagle and Fawn in late 1988 and early 1989, and a visit by military pipers in October 1988 for a charity festival.

Pakistan

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any British service personnel have visited Pakistan in an official capacity at any time in the last 10 years, excepting those personnel attached to the British embassy in Islamabad.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: There are a range of official military contacts between the United Kingdom and Pakistan. Over the last 10 years these have included short-term advisory visits, ship visits, and deployments for adventurous training. More recently, we have assisted the United Nations in providing training in mine clearance and mine awareness for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

HEALTH

Cytomegalovirus

Mr. Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects tests to be available within the Shropshire health authority area for the foetal disease cytomegalovirus.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: For any screening programme the benefits conferred by antenatal screening must clearly, outweigh any risks, such as diagnosing a foetus as infected or likely to be seriously handicapped when it is not. Studies of the pattern of cytomegalovirus infection in relation to pregnancy suggest that screening is not appropriate, since there is no drug treatment available at present and the risk that an infected mother will have a seriously handicapped baby is low.

I understand that in Shropshire a test is undertaken on newborn babies who show symptoms which may indicate that they have a virus. If the test indicates an abnormality, specimens are immediately sent to Manchester for further tests. Where necessary, babies are given the treatment they need without delay in Shropshire.

Unborn Children (Pain)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice his Department gives about the earliest point in its development when an unborn child will experience pain.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None. We are advised that reflex response to touch does not of itself indicate perception of pain, which depends on brain activity. Reflex responses have been demonstrated from around the seventh gestational week.

Abortion

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many abortions are undertaken by prostaglandins and dilation and evacuation; and at how many weeks' gestation these were undertaken.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is shown in the table.

Numbers of abortions, England and Wales, 1988[1]
Performed to usual residents by all mentions of prostaglandins and all mentions of dilation and evacuation including dilation and curettage

Method of termination	*Total*	*Gestation weeks*				
		Under 9	*9 to 12*	*13 to 19*	*19+*	[2]*N/S*
All mentions of prostaglandins	8,886	35	387	6,806	1,657	1
All mentions of dilation and evacuation including dilation and curettage	3,052	442	692	1,346	572	—

[1] Provisional.
[2] Not stated.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the numbers of doctors who undertake *(a)* more than 1,000, *(b)* more than 500 and *(c)* more than 100 abortions each year.

Mr. Freeman: I regret that the information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his reply of 1 November, *Official Report*, column *189-90*, to the hon. Member for Liverpool,

Mossley Hill, if he will now list each of the countries of origin contained in the subsections described as "Other European" and "Rest of the world".

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is listed. Abortion data by the woman's country of origin are only given where the number of terminations exceeds 24.

Europe

Denmark and Greenland
East Germany
Finland
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Netherlands
Norway and Sweden
Poland
Turkey
Yugoslavia

Rest of World

Argentina
Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay
Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland
Brazil
Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos and Philippines
Canada
China, Korea, Mongolia and Taiwan
Commonwealth Africa (nos)
Commonwealth Islands and Territories in South Atlantic/Antarctic
Commonwealth Islands in Indian Ocean
Cyprus
Egypt
Ethiopia, Somalia, Afars and Issas
Foreign Africa (nos)
Foreign Caribbean
Foreign Central Africa
Foreign Countries/Asia and Islands/Pacific
Foreign West Africa (Muslim)
Gambia
Ghana
Guyana
Hong Kong
India
Iran
Iraq
Israel
Japan
Kenya
Mainland Central America
Malagasy Republic, Foreign Islands in Indian Ocean
Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
New Zealand
Nigeria
Other Arab States
Other Commonwealth Countries and Islands in Pacific
Other Commonwealth Islands in Caribbean
Pakistan
Remainder Tropical South America
Sierra Leone
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Tanzania
Tunisia
Uganda
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Zambia

Life-saving Equipment

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what audit systems he has devised to measure the level and effectiveness of provision of essential life-saving equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: It is for individual health authorities to assess the level of requirement for, and to review the effectiveness of, life-saving equipment in hospitals.

Haemophiliacs

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the efficacy of the heat treatment of both imported and home-produced blood products as a means of preventing people with haemophilia from contracting HIV through their use.

Mr. Freeman: The efficacy of heat treatment of all kinds of blood products is continually being assessed by the manufacturers who submit their results to the licensing authority and in addition, are reviewed by the Committee on Safety of Medicines.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government have considered applying the vaccine damage payments scheme to the position of people with haemophilia who have contracted HIV through the use of blood products prescribed by the National Health Service.

Mr. Freeman: The Government have already provided an ex-gratia payment of £10 million to set up the Macfarlane Trust to meet the special needs of haemophiliacs infected with HIV and their dependants. Claims for compensation are now being pursued through the courts and I am advised these matters are sub judice.

Community Care

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will examine the implications of sections 1, 2, 3 and 7 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 for community care policy.

Mr. Freeman: Our proposals for the future of community care will make clear our intention that all local authorities should fully involve individual disabled people and carers in decisions which affect them. Concerning the implementation of remaining sections of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) and the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on 7 November at column *556* and to my reply to him on 10 November at column *825*.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will direct regional and district health authorities not to proceed with closure of National Health Service institutions where adequate plans have not been made and where the local authorities concerned are not able to offer accommodation and services to the people accommodated in that National Health Service care.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: As has been made clear in previous statements, we will not approve the closure of NHS institutions unless it can be demonstrated that adequate alternatives for care have been developed. Procedures were outlined in the circular "Discharge of Patients from hospital" (HC(89)5) sent to all health and local authorities earlier this year. A copy has been placed in the Library. In addition, from 1 April, all district health authorities will be required to have instituted a "care programme" approach for the continuing care of mentally

ill people being treated in the community to ensure that their needs are assessed before discharge and arrangements are made to meet their needs.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which local health authorities have not reached agreement with local authorities on plans for implementing "Care in the Community".

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Health authorities and local authorities are statutorily obliged to collaborate in the planning and development of community care services. Joint consultative committees are required to be set up in every DHA area, involving representatives of health and local authorities and the voluntary sector. Information is not held centrally on the specific form of agreements reached at local level on plans for community care, although health authorities are held to account for their performance as part of the annual review process.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Government's White Paper on community care will be published.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I am pleased to be able to announce that our White Paper, "Caring for People: Community Care in the Next Decade and Beyond" will be published on Thursday 16 November. It will set out the Government's proposals for the future organisation and management of community care, building on the broad conclusions which I outlined in my statement to the House on 12 July, following consideration of Sir Roy Griffiths' report. It will take account of discussions we have subsequently held with leading organisations and professional bodies in the community care field, including the voluntary sector, as well as the many views and responses we have received.

NHS Funds

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the allocation of funds for National Health Service services in *(a)* Durham area health authority, *(b)* Sunderland area health authority, *(c)* Hartlepool area health authority, and *(d)* the Northern regional health authority.

Mr. Freeman: We have received no recent representations on the allocation of funds to the Northern regional health authority or the three district health authorities named. Between 1978-79 and 1989-90 Northern region has received an estimated real terms growth of 33 per cent. compared with 30 per cent. for England as a whole. This includes an estimated real terms increase in 1989-90 of 1·9 per cent. compared to 1·6 per cent. for England as a whole. The allocation of funds to district health authorities is of course a matter solely for the regional health authority concerned.

NHS Dentists

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he will list the number of National Health Service dentists in *(a)* Durham area health authority, *(b)* Sunderland area health authority, and *(c)* Hartlepool area health authority, for each year from 1979 to 1989.

Mr. Freeman: The information is given in the tables.

General dental service dentists at 30 September each year[1]

	Cleveland FPC	*Durham FPC*	*Sunderland FPC*
1979	93	95	47
1980	93	99	46
1981	95	102	48
1982	102	110	55
1983	108	117	61
1984	120	118	61
1985	125	127	66
1986	131	126	61
1987	145	136	68
1988	146	132	67

[1] Because Family Practitioner Committee (FPC) boundaries are not coterminous with health Authority Boundaries this information on General Dental Service Dentists is not in the precise form requested. The figures for Cleveland FPC include Hartlepool HA, North Tees HA and South Tees HA and the figures for Durham FPC include Durham HA, North West Durham HA, South West Durham HA and Darlington HA.

Hospital and community health service dental staff at 30 September each year

	Hartlepool Total staff	*Durham Total staff*	*Sunderland Total staff*
1982	6	32	26
1983	5	28	25
1984	5	29	27
1985	4	26	29
1986	2	27	31
1987	3	27	32
1988	4	21	24

Notes:

1. Figures include permanent paid, honorary and locum staff. From 1987 figures also include Agency Locum staff.
2. Because of the 1982 NHS reorganisation consistent data for these DHAs are not available for earlier years.

Homoeopathy

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many homoeopathic beds are available in the north-west of England; and what plans he has to extend that provision.

Mr. Freeman: The use of complementary therapies, including homoepathy, is increasing in the NHS. There are, for example, homoeopathic clinic facilities in Manchester. However, the number of beds available in the north-west of England is not known centrally.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimates he has of the average cost of homoeopathic medicine per patient compared with the average cost of treating a patient in general practice.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We do not collect centrally patient-linked data on medicines which are prescribed. Subject only to the requirement of the selected list scheme, GPs are free to prescribe under the NHS any medicine, including homoeopathic medicines, which they consider to be clinically necessary for the treatment of their patients.

Occupational Therapists

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the percentage vacancies of occupational therapists in each local social services authority area.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: This information is not available centrally.

Premature Births

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many babies were born in 1987 at *(a)* 24 weeks, *(b)* 25 weeks, *(c)* 26 weeks and *(d)* 27 weeks gestation; how many of these babies survived for one year; how many were born so handicapped as to require special care for the rest of their lives; and what is the estimated cost in medical care for these babies for the remainder of their lives.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is not available: information on gestation is not collected at live-birth registration.

Smoking-related Diseases

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give an estimate of the amount of time lost through absenteeism of staff in the National Health Service due to smoking-related diseases; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The monitoring of sickness absence is a matter for individual employing health authorities. We do not collect such detailed information centrally.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if his Department has drawn up any guidelines for the implementation of section 7 of the Disabled Persons Act 1986;

(2) on what date he last met disability organisations to discuss section 7 of the Disabled Persons Act 1986;

(3) on what date he last met local authority associations to discuss section 7 of the Disabled Persons Act 1986.

Mr. Freeman: We have not met any bodies specifically, to discuss, section 7 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 but officials met representatives of the local authority associations in March 1989. The Government's position on implementation will be made clear in the White Paper on community care to be published shortly.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested is as follows:

21 November 1988 to 9 November 1989 inclusive

	Oral	*Written*
House of Commons	[1]841	4,615
House of Lords	44	78

[1] Of this figure 86 received an oral answer and 755 received a written answer.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Freeman: Hon. and right hon. Members will normally be referred to the responsible health or local authority for details of:

—locally determined policies and priorities;
—the applications locally of national priorities;
—statistics etc. which are only available locally;
—operational cases where responsibility rests locally and where the local mechanisms for inquiry have not yet been exhausted.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Freeman: Preparing replies for parliamentary questions is an integral part of the duties of officials of the Department. It is not possible to identify the time spent and thus the cost incurred in carrying out this particular duty.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Freeman: Changes in statistical series are made when the Government's requirements for statistical information alter and in response to changes in the administrative systems on which some series are based. Certain changes have taken place on this basis since 1979. Such changes are documented in the Department's publications as required. For example, the effect of the implementation of the recommendations of the steering group on health services information (the Korner committee) was summarised in "Health Services Information—Changes to National Statistics" as well as in publications such as "Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for England 1989", copies of which are in the Library.

The publication of certain booklets containing manpower statistics has been discontinued but these statistics are freely available in the Library and an ad hoc service provides information on demand in the most suitable form for the user. Other new booklets have been introduced in response to current demand.

AIDS

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have died from AIDS in each of the last three years in England and Wales.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Deaths of people with AIDS in England and Wales which have been reported to the communicable disease surveillance centre, by year of death are:

	Number
1986	252
1987	316
1988	310
[1]1989	240

[1] (to end September)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the number of people suffering from AIDS in England and Wales at the latest date.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: At the end of October 1989, a total of 1,229 people were reported to be suffering from AIDS in England and Wales.

Sterilisation

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he gives to district health authorities to provide for the sterilisation of women on social grounds; and if he will make a statement on the Government's policy towards the provision of social sterilisations.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Health authorities are asked to make female sterilisation operations available as an NHS service both for medical reasons and on family planning grounds where, after full consultation, it is the method of choice. The priority which can be given to these operations generally is a matter for clinical judgment and local decision.

Relocation of Work

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to implement his Department's review on the relocation of headquarters work.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have this morning announced that the whole of the work of the National Health Service management executive, involving some 1,000 posts, should be located in Leeds. I expect the first moves to begin in 1992. After that, the people in my Department responsible for the management of the NHS will be based in Leeds while those responsible for health policy and strategy will be based in London.

I have today placed copies of the review team's report in the Library. I carefully considered the review team's report before reaching my decision which closely matches its recommendation that a substantial amount of my Department's headquarters work in London should be relocated.

I welcome the parallel announcement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security that some 800 posts in DSS are also moving to Leeds.

Food Hygiene (Aircraft)

Mr. Michael Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the food hygiene regulations apply to aircraft.

Mr. Freeman: The Food Hygiene (General) Regulations 1970 apply to ground-based airline catering establishments. However, these regulations are not enforceable on aircraft. Under the Food Act 1984, enforcement officers' powers of entry to aircraft are restricted to entry for the purpose of inspecting imported food.

I am announcing today that the Government will be seeking powers to update food legislation to extend food safety controls to food supplied to passengers on aircraft flying from British airports. We will be seeking similar powers to cover ships and oil and gas rigs within British territory. Primary legislation would not impose any specific obligations, but would permit regulations to be made setting out detailed requirements in the future. Any regulations which are made will be subject to consultation with interested organisations.

These powers will be sought as part of a wider Bill dealing with food safety, which will be introduced as soon as parliamentary time permits.

Organ Transplants

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the patients waiting on the kidney transplant list for an organ have already had at least one transplanted organ; and how many are new additions.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 30 October 1989]:* According to information provided by the United Kingdom transplant service, the number of United Kingdom patients waiting for a kidney transplant on 7 November 1989 was 3,506. Of this total 1,001 (or 29 per cent.) of patients had previously received a transplant.

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of kidney transplants carried out by the individual regional health authorities during the past 12 months and, where possible, whether the transplants derived from kidney donors in their areas or as a result of United Kingdom transplant service.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 30 October 1989]:* Information is not readily available in the precise form requested. The number of kidney transplants reported by NHS hospitals to the United Kingdom transplant service for 1988 is shown in the table. The total number of transplants performed within each regional health authority area is divided into those using organs retrieved by the transplanting centre, and those using organs imported from another retrieving centre either within or outside the region concerned.

Regional Health Authority	*Transplants*[1]	*Transplants*[2]	*Total*
Northern	71	22	93
Yorkshire	43	35	78
Trent	50	49	99
East Anglia	77	5	82
North West Thames	23	35	58
North East Thames	78	63	141
South East Thames	85	86	171
South West Thames	33	17	50
Wessex	56	8	64
Oxford	60	9	69
South Western	74	33	107
West Midlands	67	61	128
Mersey	34	20	54
North Western	97	33	130
Special Health Authorities	8	15	23

[1] Using organs retrieved by local centre
[2] Using organs imported from another centre

Lobotomy and Leucotomy Operations

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is his Department's current advice on the value of pre-frontal lobotomy and leucotomy operations.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* The Department does not offer a view on the value or otherwise of particular surgical procedures. Decisions about treatment are for the professions involved. Psycho-surgical operations can only be undertaken when the special procedures of section 57 of the Mental Health Act 1983 have been followed.

National Health Service Spending

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources he intends to commit to health education in 1990; and what was the proportion of the National Health Service budget spent on health education in *(a)* 1974, *(b)* 1979 and *(c)* 1984.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 2 November 1989]:* The information available relates to provision for the Health Education Authority and the Department's information services. This includes some items, for example nurse recuitment, which are not primarily educational. It excludes the expenditure on health education by regional health authorities, which is not identified separately. For the year ending 31 March 1990, current provision for the Health Education Authority and the Department's information services is about £41 million. As a proportion of total National Health Service expenditure, provision for these two programmes was:

Year ending	*Percent.*
31 March 1974	0·09
31 March 1979	0·07
31 March 1984	0·09

HOME DEPARTMENT

Political Refugees

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many political refugees there are at present in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information is not available on the total numbers of those who have been granted refugee status in the United Kingdom and are still living here. Available information on grants of refugee status is set out in an annual Home Office statistical bulletin (most recently "Refugee Statistics, United Kingdom, 1988", issue 25/89) and in provisional quarterly figures supplied to UNHCR, copies of which are placed in the Library.

Information on acceptances for settlement as refugees is published in the annual command paper (most recently "Control of Immigration: Statistics, United Kingdom, 1988" Cm 726, table 18), and in a quarterly statistical bulletin (most recently "Control of Immigration: Statistics —Second Quarter 1989", issue 31/89, table 3); copies of which are also in the Library.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the countries from which persons are seeking political refuge.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Available information on pending applications for refugee status, broken down by nationality, is set out in an annual Home Office statistically bulletin (most recently "Refugee Statistics United Kingdom, 1988" issue 25/89) and in provisional quarterly figures supplied to UNHCR, copies of which are placed in the Library.

Wandsworth (Prison Officers' Accommodation)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of prison officers' accommodation at Wandsworth prison for which requests have been made by officers to purchase, as of 1 November.

Mr. Mellor: A total of 132 requests have been received to purchase, under the Prison Department scheme for the discount sale of quarters, from officers at Wandsworth. Of these 95 relate to houses of which 60 sales have been completed, 23 are in the hands of solicitors, 10 offers have been made and two are with the district valuer. In addition, there are 37 applications to purchase flats or maisonettes, these being leasehold pose particular problems and it is also necessary to set up management companies to administer these properties after sale. The Treasury Solicitor, in liaison with two firms of private solicitors, is currently working on the documentation for this and the draft leases as necessary for the sale of individual flats. A further house at Wandsworth has been sold outside the discount sales scheme at full market value.

ACPO (Europe Working Party)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what co-ordination there has been between his Department and the Association of Chief Police Officers working party on Europe; and whether any Government funding is granted to the working group.

Mr. Waddington: My officials have regular discussions with members of the association on European and other international policing matters. The Home Office has made a grant to the association of £191,000 in 1989-90 to meet the costs of its secretariat, which supports the association's activities in general.

Child Abuse

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of child abuse cases dealt with by magistrates and other courts in 1988-89; and in how many cases a guilty verdict was recorded.

Mr. John Patten: The available information is given in the table. It is only possible from the information held centrally to identify offences where the victim is known to be aged under 16. 1989 data are not yet available.

Defendants prosecuted at magistrates' courts and found guilty[1] at all courts for specific offences involving children under 16 England and Wales 1988

Offence	*Total proceeded against*	*Total found guilty*
Violence against the person		
Murder of infant under 1 year of age	13	1
Infanticide	1	4
Child Destruction	2	—
Cruelty to, or neglect of, children	229	165
Abandoning child aged under 2 years	—	1
Child abduction	56	26
Sexual offences		
Buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	320	232
Attempt to commit buggery with a boy under the age of 16 or with a woman or an animal	28	31
Indecent assault on a male aged under 16 years	559	460
Indecent assault on a female aged under 16 years	2,159	1,650
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl aged under 13	165	135
Unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl aged under 16	345	340

Offence	*Total proceeded against*	*Total found guilty*
Incest with girl under 13	105	104
Inciting girl aged under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	3	2
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with girl aged under 16 years	10	5
Person responsible for girl aged under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution, etc.	—	1
Abduction of unmarried girl aged under 16	20	8
Gross indecency with children	226	246
Summary offences		
Violence against the person		
Cruelty to, or neglect of, children	2	2

[1]Includes persons proceeded against in earlier years or for other offences.

Fire Brigades

Mr. Bill Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Heeley, *Official Report*, 27 October 1988, column *321*, whether he is satisfied with the progress being made on the preparation of fire brigade war plans; and if he will make a statement about the outcome of his review of this matter.

Mr. John Patten: Initial findings of the review indicated wide variations between brigades in the level of their war planning. Chief fire officers have been provided with information and guidance on their brigade plans, and encouraging progress has generally been made. Plans will continue to reviewed as part of the wider process of monitoring local authorities' civil defence preparedness.

Mr. Bill Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has received any representations concerning the possible appointment of fire officers as members of the ad hoc working party on emergency communications; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Yes. However, we are satisfied that relevant fire service interests can be adequately covered through the existing local authority staff membership of the working party and, where necessary, through direct contact with fire staff engaged on civil defence activities.

Right of Arrest

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is Her Majesty's Government policy towards accepting the right of arrest on United Kingdom soil by United States Government law enforcement agents of prospective offenders, without due application for extradition, as has recently been endorsed by the United States Department of Justice.

Mr. Waddington: It is the Government's established policy strenuously to resist all attempts by any foreign country to exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction within the United Kingdom.

Bail

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of all those cases that come before magistrates courts where the police do not oppose bail are refused bail.

Mr. John Patten: Information is not available centrally on the number of cases where magistrates courts have remanded defendants in custody although the Crown Prosecution Service did not oppose the grant of bail. However, a sample drawn from two magistrates' courts in 1986 suggests that the proportion is very small, (about 2 per cent. of cases where no objection to bail was made).

Drugs

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inmates in gaols in England and Wales were disciplined for the possession and use of an unlawful drug during: *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* so far in 1989.

Mr. Mellor: Some 1,630 offences of possession of controlled drugs were punished in 1986, 1,540 in 1987 and 1,940 in 1988. Information for 1989 is not yet available.

Crime Concern Initiative

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will indicate the expenditure to date on his Crime Concern initiative.

Mr. John Patten: Crime Concern, the independent crime prevention organisation, received a Home Office grant-in-aid of £500,000 in 1988-89; the grant for the current year is £1 million.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress and achievements of the Crime Concern initiative.

Mr. John Patten: Since it was established in May 1988 Crime Concern has made encouraging progress in its central task of stimulating and supporting local crime prevention activity. So far the organisation has
raised money through private sector sponsorship for various projects;
launched, in close association with the Confederation of British Industry, a national business and crime initiative;
held several conferences, including one for members of youth crime prevention panels;
relaunched the magazine *Good Neighbour* as a means of communicating with members of Neighbourhood Watch; we look to them to do everything possible to promote the Neighbourhood Watch movement as a priority; and
set up in Luton the first of a series of area crime reduction programmes involving co-operation between the police, local government and other agencies, and the private sector; I am informed that negotiations are under way in 15 other places.

Lotteries

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on the mailing of lottery tickets to United Kingdom residents and if he has any plans *(a)* to prohibit participation by British citizens in such lotteries or *(b)* to permit the promoters of British lotteries to compete on equal terms.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The promotion or conduct of public foreign lotteries in Great Britain is unlawful under the

Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976. In breach of that Act, invitations to participate in a number of such lotteries have been mailed to addresses here. Between 1 January and 30 October 1989 inclusive, three hon. Members have asked us questions related to this postal activity, and we have received 11 letters from hon. Members and 10 from organisations or members of the public about it. These representations have variously complained about this unlawful activity, or suggested that its continuance might argue for the introduction of domestic, major lotteries. We are taking steps to deal with this postal activity.

We do not propose that it should become an offence to participate in a foreign lottery. We keep the arguments for amending our law to allow domestic major lotteries under consideration.

Interpreters

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many complaints have been lodged by Kurdish asylum seekers against interpreters; and how many interpreters have had in excess of three complaints lodged against them since May;

(2) how many interpreters involved in Kurdish cases have been dismissed since 10 May;

(3) how many investigations have been instituted against interpreters in Kurdish asylum cases since 1 May.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information is not maintained on the basis of ethnic origin. Since May, 13 formal written complaints by Turkish asylum seekers or their representatives have been referred to immigration service headquarters. One interpreter has been the subject of more than three of these since May. Three investigations have been started, of which two have been concluded. No interpreters have been dismissed during this period, but two names have been removed from the list of casually-employed interpreters.

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will state the procedures for the training of interpreters;

(2) whether he will state the recruitment procedures for interpreters in immigration and asylum cases.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The recruitment of interpreters for permanent pensionable employment with the Home Office is conducted by the Civil Service Commission, which runs an open competition when a vacancy arises. In addition, fee-paid interpreting services are used by the immigration service on an ad hoc basis as required. Applicants are interviewed and assessed for the suitability by senior officers. No formal training is given, but interpreters are instructed to give a direct translation of questions put and answers given.

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will publish the standing instructions for interpreters in immigration and asylum cases.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: There are no written instructions for interpreters. Interpreters are briefed by senior officers before their services are used by the immigration service. The conduct of interviews in which an interpreter is used is the responsibility of the interviewing officer.

Political Asylum Unit

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many interviews between the political asylum unit at Harmondsworth and Kurdish asylum seekers have been cancelled since 1 May at the request of the political asylum unit; and how many of those interviewees were represented by solicitors or other advisers.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The available information is that of 1,500 interviews booked by the Harmondsworth interview unit, a total of 292 have so far been rescheduled, mostly at the request of the unit. A total of 184 interviewees were represented by solicitors or other advisers at the time the interview was rescheduled.

Turkish Kurds

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Turkish Kurds have been held in detention in excess of *(a)* one month, *(b)* two months and *(c)* three months since 1 May; and of those held in detention in excess of each period, how many were subsequently granted exceptional leave to remain or political asylum.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information is not maintained on the basis of ethnic origin. In the period 1 May-30 October inclusive, 32 Turkish nationals were detained for longer than one month but less than two months; 23 were detained for longer than two months but less than three months; and 63 were detained for longer than three months. In all of these cases detainees were subsequently released from detention. Information is not readily available on the outcome of these cases.

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Turkish Kurds were held in detention for 12 hours or more following a recommendation by group A that they be granted exceptional leave to remain or political asylum since 1 May.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information is not maintained on the basis of ethnic origin. The other information is not readily available in the form requested. When the immigration service is notified of a decision by the refugee unit of the Home Office that an applicant should be given asylum or exceptional leave to remain, it arranges for the applicant's release from detention as soon as is practicable.

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many Turkish Kurds have been served with minded to refuse notices since 1 May; how many of these have subsequently been granted *(a)* exceptional leave to remain and *(b)* political asylum;

(2) how many Turkish Kurds, refused leave to enter, were subsequently granted exceptional leave to remain or political asylum since 1 May 1989.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: A total of 294 of the Turkish nationals who sought asylum on entry since 1 May have been allowed to remain here on an exceptional basis and 78 have been recognised as refugees under the 1951 convention. Central records do not distinguish at what stage of the procedure leave to enter was granted and this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department where an application for political

asylum has been submitted by a Kurdish applicant already in the United Kingdom *(a)* how many have been granted exceptional leave to remain without interview and *(b)* how many have been granted political asylum for the periods (i) January 1987 to 1988, (ii) July 1988 to 31 December 1988 and (iii) 1 January 1989 to 1 November 1989.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The readily available information is given in the following table:

Grants of refugee status or of exceptional leave to Turkish nationals[1] who applied for refugee status when already in the United Kingdom

Number of persons

	Granted refugee status	*Granted exceptional leave*
1987	2	3
January 1988 to June 1988[2]	[3]	5
July 1988 to December 1988[2]	[3]	15
January 1989 to September 1989[2]	90	280

[1]The ethnic origin of asylum applicants is not recorded but the majority of Turkish applicants have stated that they are Kurds.
[2]Provisional estimates; figures rounded to the nearest 5.
[3] = less than 3.

Information on the number of these decisions which were made without interview is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Full information on decisions since September 1989 is not yet available.

Immigration Officers (Training)

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will outline the training given to immigration officers for interviewing asylum seekers.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: On appointment all immigration officers attend a basic training course which includes training and practice in interview techniques, followed by an intensive period of supervised interviewing of passengers, who may include asylum seekers. The course also includes lectures from officers of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and specialists from the refugee unit of the Home Office, and exercises in the handling of asylum applications. In addition instructions are issued from time to time on the handling of these cases.

Guildford Pub Bombings

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the West Midlands listing the West Midlands police officers who visited Guildford during the pub bombings investigations.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Full records are no longer available to show the movements of west midlands police officers during the pub bombings investigations. Such records as exist do not show that any west midlands officer visited Guildford at that time.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *39-40*, if he will ask the Chief Constable of Surrey how many of the nine police officers referred to are still serving.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: As the hon. Member will know from the answer given to him on 30 October, at columns *39-40*, most of the police records relating to the time of the Birmingham pub bombings have been destroyed. The nine police officers cannot therefore all be identified. Of the officers that have been identified, I understand that three are still serving.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answer of 30 October, *Official Report*, columns *39-40*, whether normal liaison arrangements included the presence of Guildford police officers at interrogations conducted by West Midlands police with terrorist suspects.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No.

Woolwich Bombing

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what liaison took place between officers of the West Midlands police force and the Metropolitan police following the Woolwich bombing.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Details of any liaison which may have taken place between the two forces at that time are no longer available.

Royal Ordnance Factory, Blackburn

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of Lancashire on the circumstances in which police officers were called to the Royal Ordnance factory, Blackburn, following the detention there by civilian guards of a photographer from the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph*, on Thursday 9 November.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Crack Seizures

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police forces where there have been seizures of crack in the current year and the number of seizures in each area.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Figures supplied by the police to the national drugs intelligence unit, which may not be complete, show that police forces made crack seizures as follows between 1 January and 31 October 1989:

Force	*Number of seizures*
Greater Manchester	7
Merseyside	5
Lancashire	1
North Wales	1
Nottinghamshire	2
South Yorkshire	1
West Yorkshire	1
West Midlands	9
Surrey	2
Avon and Somerset	9
Dorset	1
Metropolitan	48
Total	87

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the value of the seizures of crack *(a)* in the current year *(b)* in 1988 and *(c)* in 1987.

Mr. Mellor: The approximate street value of seizures of crack reported to the national drugs intelligence unit in the periods requested was as follows:

	£
1987	800
1988	11,500
[1]1989	21,000

[1] January to September.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Waddington: Readily available information within this Department relates to the number of questions answered by Home Office Ministers before the summer recess, and is as follows:

558—Oral questions
2,878—Written questions

I understand that further information is available in the Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Waddington: None, apart from those transferred to other Government Departments.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many written parliamentary questions to him in the parliamentary Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics and *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Waddington: This information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Waddington: This information is not held centrally.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Prison Chaplains

Mr. Alison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has, in the context of the review of the organisation of the prison service, to ensure that the headquarters team of the prison chaplaincy can continue to exercise an appropriate supervisory role, on behalf of diocesan bishops, in regard to the ministry in prisons of full-time chaplains; how this church linkage will be reconciled or integrated with possible changes in the chaplains' operational accountability to governors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: The report of the review of prison service organisation above establishment level accepts the case for retaining a chaplain general for the prison service, with a small team of staff providing professional support to chaplains and contributing to the development of policy on the role of chaplains in the service. There are no proposals for changing chaplains' operational accountability to governors.

We have yet to reach decisions on the report's proposals. Any new organisational structure for the prison service would have to take account of the role of the relevant Church authorities in respect of the appointment and ministry of chaplains.

Gun Clubs

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make an announcement about the controls on gun clubs.

Mr. Waddington: Following the two recent tragic shooting incidents in the Greater Manchester police area I have considered carefully whether further steps need to be taken to tighten controls on gun clubs in the interest of public safety.

Under section 15 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 a member of a rifle or pistol club approved by the Secretary of State may, without holding a firearm certificate, have in his possession a firearm and ammunition when engaged as a member of the club in, or in connection with, target practice. This exemption does not extend to club members who are involved in competition, for which a firearm certificate is required.

Both of the recent shootings involved a person who had gained access to firearms and ammunition by signing on as a day member of a shooting club. Having reviewed the matter carefully, I am minded to decide that in future clubs operating day or temporary membership schemes shall no longer be approved by me. Any applicant for probationary membership of an approved club will be required to be sponsored by two full members of the club both of whom are firearm certificate holders.

Probationary members when in possession of firearms or ammunition will be required to be constantly supervised by the range master or a full member of the club holding a firearm certificate. Probationary members, who must under the club's scheme remain probationers for at least six months, must also be given a course of instruction in the safe use of guns. No club should at any time have more probationary members than full members.

These proposed arrangements reflect the high standards which already operate in many approved clubs. I have no wish to impose unreasonable burdens on genuine gun clubs. But the public have a right to expect that they should be operated with proper regard for public safety. The package of controls which I propose will help to ensure that only those genuinely interested in pursuing the sport will attain full membership. It will also help to exclude those interested in guns for the wrong reasons. It will also ensure that probationary members are properly selected, supervised and instructed.

Approved gun clubs will continue to be encouraged to offer properly constituted probationary membership schemes for novice shooters. They will also be allowed to organise open days for those interested in taking up the sport, but those attending will not be allowed to possess, handle or use firearms. Full members of approved gun clubs will continue to be allowed to become visiting members of other approved clubs.

Section 15 of the 1988 Act which came into operation on 1 July 1989 gives the police new power to enter and inspect club premises. This power will be used to ensure that clubs are complying with the provisions of the section and any limitations in the Secretary of State's approval.

Before reaching a final decision on these proposed new controls I am asking the Firearms Consultative Committee as a matter of urgency to let me have its views following its next meeting on 30 November.

Electronic Monitoring

Mr. Knowles: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what use has so far been made of electronic monitoring as a condition of bail; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The three pilot studies started according to schedule in the Nottingham, North Tyneside and Tower Bridge magistrates courts on, respectively, 14 August, 18 September and 23 October. As at 10 November we have received notification that 76 defendants in these areas had been recommended for consideration of the grant of bail subject to a condition of electronic monitoring; of these cases, 26 were granted bail by magistrates and Crown courts subject to this condition; of these, 14 are still on bail and being monitored. Electronic monitoring as a condition of bail is granted by the courts only in those cases where a defendant would otherwise have been remanded in custody. These cases therefore represent 26 defendants who, but for the availability of electronic monitoring, would have been remanded immediately in custody.

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government have reached a conclusion on their response to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of Brogan and others concerning detention under the prevention of terrorism legislation.

Mr. Waddington: The European Court of Human Rights held in the case of Brogan and others that the detention of the four applicants under schedule 12 of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 (now schedule 14 of the Act of 1989) constituted a breach of article 5(3) of the European Convention on Human Rights because none of the applicants was brought "promptly" before a judicial authority. Under schedule 14 a person who is arrested on reasonable suspicion of involvement in acts of terrorism may be held by the police for a maximum of 48 hours during which period the necessity for continued detention must be reviewed regularly by a senior police officer not involved in the investigation. The Secretary of State may then extend that period of detention up to a maximum of a further five days before that person must either be released, or must be charged or excluded from a part or whole of the United Kingdom.

Since the court delivered its judgment on 29 November 1988 the Government have been considering whether it would be possible to introduce a judicial element in the procedure for authorising extensions of detention in a way which would be compatible with the provisions of the convention and which would not weaken the effectiveness of their response to terrorism.

The Government believe that in the context of the continued threat to the United Kingdom, on a scale unknown elsewhere in Europe, posed by terrorism connected with the affairs of Northern Ireland the power to hold terrorist suspects for a period of up to seven years is essential. The continued necessity for this power—and the other powers in the Prevention of Terrorism Act—is reviewed annually by both Houses of Parliament.

Decisions to authorise the detention of terrorist suspects for periods beyond 48 hours may be, and often are, taken on the basis of information, the nature and source of which could not be revealed to a suspect or his legal adviser without serious risk to individuals assisting the police or the prospect of further valuable intelligence being lost. Any new procedure which avoided those dangers by allowing a court to make a decision on information not presented to the detainee or his legal advisor would represent a radical departure from the principles which govern judicial proceedings in this country and could serious affect public trust and confidence in the independence of the judiciary. The Government would be most reluctant to introduce any new procedure which could have this effect.

The Government further believe that the present arrangements represent reasonable safeguards for the detained person. They guarantee to the suspect an early review of the continued need for his detention, provide that any extension of that detention beyond two days must be authorisied by the Secretary of State, and that he must be released, charged or excluded within a maximum of seven days from his arrest.

The Government have concluded that a satisfactory procedure for the review of detention of terrorist suspects involving the judiciary has not been identified. The derogation notified on 23 December 1988 under article 15 of the European Convention on Human Rights and article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights must and will therefore remain in place for as long as circumstances require. The derogation is limited to the powers under the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 to detain for up to seven days those suspected of involvement in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism connected with the affairs of Northern Ireland.

Litter

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on *(a)* the frequency with which the £400 maximum fine has been imposed for littering under the Litter Act 1983 and *(b)* the average fine recorded for this offence.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 10 November 1989]:* The information requested is in the table.

Defendants found guilty and fined under the Litter Act 1963
England and Wales

Year	*Total found guilty*	*Total number fined*	*Number fined £400*	*Average fine (£)*
1986	1,425	1,390	3	35
1987	1,694	1,628	1	35
1988	1,607	1,555	2	40

Police Officers (Fatalities)

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers in the last 10 years have been killed in the course of carrying out duties involved in investigating drug-related crime.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* Twenty-five police officers in England and Wales died in the course of their duties as a result of murder or manslaughter between 1978 and 1988 inclusive. Details of the circumstances surrounding these deaths are not held centrally. It is not therefore possible to determine in which of the cases the officer was investigating an offence, and, where he or she was doing so, whether or not there was any form of drugs connection.

Electronic Tagging

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many defendants have been electronically tagged since the scheme became operational; how many of these defendants have breached the conditions of their bail; and how many have experienced difficulty in obtaining benefit because of the length of their curfew.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 27 October 1989]:* The information is given in the table.

Persons electronically monitored[1] in Home Office trials

Trial area	*Number of defendants monitored*	*Number breaching conditions[2]*
Nottingham	13	5
North Tyneside	[3]9	3
Tower Bridge	4	1
Total	26	9

[1] As at 10.00 am on 10 November 1989.
[2] Defendants breaching bail conditions or committing further offence.
[3] One of these persons has been monitored twice. Following arrest for breach of conditions a further recommendation for monitoring was accepted and conditions reimposed.
Note: Two of the persons monitored in Nottingham have been sentenced to periods of imprisonment, one for 12 months and the other for 18 months. One person in north Tyneside had his bail conditions altered to exclude electronic monitoring.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security is writing to the hon. Member about the question of eligibility for benefit.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Funding Councils

3. **Mr. Stern:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects the move of the two higher education funding councils to Bristol to be completed.

Mr. Jackson: The purpose-built accommodation in Bristol is expected to be completed at the end of June 1991. The funding councils aim is to complete relocation by September 1991.

Student Loans

14. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any meetings arranged with Scottish university principals to discuss the effect of student loans upon Scottish four-year degree courses.

31. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any meetings arranged with Scottish university principals to discuss the effect of student loans on Scottish four-year degree courses.

114. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any meeting arranged with Scottish university principals to discuss the effect of student loans upon Scottish four-year degree courses.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond).

27. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the effects on disabled students of his plans to introduce top-up loans for students.

72. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the effects on disabled students of his plans to introduce top-up loans for students.

118. **Mr. Alfred Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how he plans to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged by the current proposals in the White Paper on top-up loans for students.

Mr. Jackson: The top-up loans scheme has been designed to apply to students in a variety of circumstances and those of disabled students have not been overlooked. They will remain eligible for the additional allowances available with the grant and will retain their entitlement to social security benefits. After their courses, they will be protected by the provisions for deferment of repayments and write-off of the debt if their income is low.

49. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to amend the financial assumptions upon which the top-up loans White Paper is based.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) on 6 November at column *423*.

68. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what consultations he has had with the clearing banks concerning student loans.

73. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what conclusions his discussions with the banks have reached with regard to the student loans scheme.

97. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has recently received from the committee of London and Scottish clearing banks in relation to his proposals for student top-up loans; and if he will make a statement.

111. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what conclusions his discussions with the banks have reached with regard to the student loans scheme.

Mr. Jackson: Constructive discussions are being held with a range of financial institutions. The House will be informed of the conclusions in due course.

75. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information his Department holds regarding the debts of students in higher education in respect of financial loans.

Mr. Jackson: Information about student borrowing is contained in the 1986-87 survey of undergraduate income and expenditure conducted by Research Services Ltd. and the 1987-88 OPCS survey of mature students' incomings and outgoings. Copies of both are available in the Library.

A more recent survey conducted by Research Services Ltd., the results of which are published today, shows that over the 1988-89 academic year young single students' average net borrowing in the form of overdrafts and commercial loans was £108. This is comparable to the 1986-87 figure of £110 (in 1989 prices).

National Curriculum

15. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to ensure that there will be enough teachers to teach the national curriculum.

Mr. MacGregor: I expect there to be sufficient primary teachers for the delivery of the national curriculum, and sufficient secondary teachers overall, though there is a continuing need to address demand in some subjects. Since July 1986 the Government have spent over £50 million on a wide range of initiatives aimed both at producing more teachers and at improving the balance of subject capability of those already there. We shall continue and reinforce that action programme to ensure that we have the teachers we need.

66. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what current financial provision has been made for the introduction of the national curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The cost of implementing the national curriculum will be met largely from the redirection of existing resources. However, support for some £130 million expenditure is available specifically to help the introduction of the national curriculum this financial year.

City Technology Colleges

16. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his latest estimate of the total cost of implementing his policy on city technology colleges.

Mr. MacGregor: Total planned Government expenditure from the announcement of city technology colleges to the end of the financial year 1991-92 is £122·3 million. In addition sponsors have pledged contributions totalling over £43 million.

23. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for the expansion of the city technology college programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that my right hon. Friend gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

37. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the contribution of city technology colleges to education in the inner city.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is too early yet to evaluate the impact of CTCs in detail. But it is already clear that they are immensely popular with parents and pupils; and the £43 million which has already been pledged by sponsors represents a great vote of confidence. With three CTCs now open, and eight more with firm opening dates, we are looking very carefully at how the good practices they are pioneering can best be disseminated.

61. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, how much *(a)* public money and *(b)* private money from industry has been spent on each of the city technology colleges.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for The Wrekin (Mr. Grocott) on 20 October at col. *264*.

67. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress so far made in establishing city technology colleges; and what action he proposes to take to ensure that all the first 20 are operational with the least possible delay.

86. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the future of the city technology colleges programme.

101. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the present state of the city technology colleges programme.

104. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for the development of the city technology college programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The CTC programme continues to make excellent progress. Three CTCs are now open, only three years after the programme was announced. We have firm starting dates for a further eight colleges, in 1990 and 1991. In addition, other firms and individuals have indicated their commitment to major sponsorship. We shall continue to work with them towards the Government's target of 20 CTCs.

112. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy to extend the principle of city technology colleges to non-urban areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: CTCs are focusing on urban areas because it is there that the aspirations and expectations of pupils and parents are, generally, furthest from fulfilment. But our intention is that CTCs should be exemplars for all schools, including those in rural areas, and we shall look carefully at how their good practices can be effectively disseminated.

Mrs. Maureen Hicks: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the response by parents to prospective city technology colleges in their areas.

Mr. Macgregor: The response has been very good. For example, Kingshurst had over 1,200 inquiries for the 180 places available this year and Nottingham had over 300 applications for 165 places available this year.

School Sport

17. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to expand the opportunities for sport in schools.

57. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what initiatives he intends to take to improve the provision of school sport; and if he will make a statement.

74. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what initiatives he intends to take to improve the provision of school sport; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Sport is an important element in physical education, which is a foundation subject in the national curriculum. It will therefore form part of the curriculum for every pupil aged five to 16 in a maintained school. I hope to advise shortly on what machinery will be set up to advise on the national curriculum requirements for physical education and sport.

Schools (Local Management)

18. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from Norfolk headteachers about the implementation of local management of schools.

Mr. MacGregor: I have had various discussions with headteachers in Norfolk about aspects of local management of schools, and some correspondence.

105. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about the funding of teachers' salaries through the local management initiative.

35. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about the implementation of local management of schools.

60. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent representations has he received regarding local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations from local education authorities, school governors, headteachers, teachers and parents. Very many of these have expressed heartening support for the key principles of local management of schools. There is, however, concern about the position of schools with high teaching staff costs when funding is determined mainly by pupil numbers. In response we have made clear that LEA's formulae may enhance the funding for small schools with above average salary costs, and that for larger schools in particular difficulties we would consider sympathetically proposals for an extended transition period to pure LMS formula funding.

55. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many submissions from local education authorities concerning local management of schools he has approved; and if he will make a statement.

63. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many submissions from local education authorities concerning local management of schools he has approved; and if he will make a statement.

76. **Mr. Colin Shepherd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress being made in respect of the local management of schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: Each local education authority has now submitted its scheme for the local management of schools, and my right hon. Friend has already announced his intention to approve 8 of these schemes for introduction in April 1990.

School Transport

19. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what moves his Department is taking to introduce seat belts into school transport and the use of warning lights and signs on the outside of school buses.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My hon. Friend the Minister for Roads and Traffic will be announcing later today plans to consult on draft regulations requiring the use of distinctive signs on school buses.

I very much welcome this initiative. The Department of Education and Science will shortly be writing to all local education authorities encouraging them to do what they can in advance of the final regulations to speed up the introduction of warning signs. We shall also be collecting other examples of good practice in promoting safety on school transport, to help authorities collectively in their efforts to provide the safest possible service to all pupils.

We are pressing European Community member states to agree common legislation on the fitting of seat belts on coaches and mini-buses. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and I believe that belts can and should be provided and should be worn when available.

School Building

20. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the capital allocation for new school building will be announced.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend expects to be able to announce the annual capital guidelines for capital expenditure on education in 1990-91 to local education authorities shortly before the Christmas recess.

Capital Expenditure (Bradford)

21. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the provision of extra capital expenditure for Bradford to take account of expanding school roles.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Bradford local education authority has received an allocation for prescribed expenditure for 1989-90 and it is for the authority to decide how to use the resources available to it in the light of local needs and priorities. Annual capital guidelines for education expenditure in 1990-91 are currently being considered and my right hon. Friend expects to be in a position to announce these in December. In setting allocations my

right hon. Friend takes into account and gives priority to local education authority needs in areas of population growth.

Higher Education

22. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are his proposals for increasing the number of students in higher education over the next 20 years, including the funding arrangements for them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Government's education policies have helped secure record participation. For the first time, there will be over 1 million students in higher education this autumn. We are confident that participation will increase yet further, and we stand by our commitment to ensure that higher education continues to receive an appropriate share of public expenditure.

Departmental Expenditure

24. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what account he has taken of Her Majesty's inspectorate's observations about the effective use of his Department's expenditure as recorded in paragraph 71 of Her Majesty's inspectorate's report "The Lower Attaining Pupils' Programme 1982-88"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Morley) on 7 November at cols. *585-86*.

Child Abuse

25. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what advice his Department has issued to local education authorities on how to increase teachers' sensitivity to the possibility of child abuse and on how to make an appropriate response to any suspicions.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department issued in July last year a circular entitled "Working Together for the Protection of Children from Abuse: Procedures Within the Education Service", which is designed to help local education authorities and schools to increase the effectiveness of their efforts to prevent and deal with child abuse. The circular includes advice regarding possible signs of abuse, and on action which should be taken within the education service to enable cases of suspected or identified abuse to be properly considered and pursued.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will organise a conference of education authorities which have followed training programmes concerning child abuse; how many have held training sessions in the last 12 months; and how many advice notices have been issued by his department to encourage such training courses;

(2) what information he has on how many educational authorities have organised special courses which would help teachers recognise signs of child abuse.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Department's circular "Working Together for the Protection of Children From Abuse", issued in July 1988, included the recommendation that local education authorities should develop arrangements for the appropriate in-service training of teachers and other staff on child abuse matters.

The Department has asked all local education authorities to report by the end of this month on the action they have taken to give effect to this and the other recommendations in the circular. These reports should provide information regarding the number of local education authorities which have arranged training provision for teachers and other staff.

The Department has no current plans to organise a conference of local education authorities which have followed training programmes concerning child abuse.

A-Levels

26. **Mr. Callaghan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what review he has undertaken of the position of A-levels; and if he will make a statement.

43. **Mr. Fisher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what review he has undertaken of the position of A-levels; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend received advice in July from the School Examinations and Assessment Council on the future development of the advanced level examining system, recommending, and seeking approval for, a programme of work to develop general principles to govern A-level and AS examinations. These principles should provide controls on standards, syllabus development and progression from GCSE, together with a mechanism for rationalising and improving the quality of syllabuses. SEAC's advice also related to the promotion of AS examinations.

My right hon. Friend accepted that advice, and a copy of the exchange of correspondence has been placed in the Library of the House. My right hon. Friend expects to write very shortly on some further aspects of SEAC's advice, on the relationship between A-level and AS syllabuses and wider issues of education and training for all young people aged to 19.

The work now put in hand will enable the existing structure of A-level and AS examinations to evolve to meet changing needs, and, in particular, both to encourage movement towards a broader curriculum for advanced-level students and to secure future progression from the national curriculum into advanced-level study.

Achievement Records

28. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to develop the records of achievement initiative.

70. **Mr. Henderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to develop the records of achievement initiative.

Mrs. Rumbold: Draft regulations and an accompanying circular on information to parents on their child's achievements in the national curriculum subjects and otherwise in public examinations are to be issued shortly. These will set a minimum statutory context against which records of achievement may be further developed, subject to local priorities and resources.

Special Educational Needs

29. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures he has taken to ensure children with special educational needs receive a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their ability under the national curriculum.

47. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what measures he has taken to ensure children with special educational needs receive a broad and balanced curriculum, appropriate to their ability under the national curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: National curriculum attainment targets and programmes of study are being designed to allow access by the vast majority of pupils. In a small minority of cases some pupils with special educational needs may nevertheless need to have the requirements modified or lifted to meet their particular needs and abilities. However, even where exceptions have been made, maintained schools are still under a duty to ensure that the curricula they offer pupils are balanced and broadly based, in accordance with the requirements of section 1 of the Education Reform Act 1988.

90. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the level of provision for children with special educational needs.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The responsibility for making appropriate provision for children with special educational needs lies with each individual local education authority. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment announced on 6 November the Government's proposals for the local authority grant settlement in 1990-91, including spending on education. Those proposals allow for increased spending per pupil in 1990-91 in maintained special schools relative to that assumed within the comparable total for 1989-90. Expenditure on pupils with special educational needs in ordinary schools cannot be separately identified.

Grant-maintained Schools

30. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met the Grant Maintained Schools Trust; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend last met the chairman and officials of the Grant Maintained Schools Trust on 17 October when he attended a dinner at a conference organised by the trust for teachers and governors in grant-maintained schools.

32. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications he has received from schools seeking to opt out of direct local authority management and control; how many have been approved; and how many schoolchildren are affected.

45. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many applications for grant-maintained status he has granted; and how many he expects to grant in the immediate future.

77. **Mrs. Gorman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools have sought grant-maintained status.

106. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools have opted for grant-maintained status.

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools have now applied to opt out of local education authority control; and in how many cases he has given his consent.

Mrs. Rumbold: To date 50 schools have voted in favour of applying for grant-maintained status, of which 47 have so far published proposals. My right hon. Friend has taken decisions on 36 cases, of which 28 have been approved for grant-maintained status. Decisions on the remaining proposals will be taken on their merits in due course. Some 12,300 school-children are attending schools which became grant-maintained in September; the total number attending schools so far approved to become grant-maintained is 19,000.

100. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many schools in Cleveland have begun proceedings to opt out of the local education authority control.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am not aware of any school in the Cleveland area having begun proceedings to opt out of local education authority control.

103. **Mr. Barry Porter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what formula his Department will use for central funding of schools which choose to opt out; what representations he has received on this matter; and if he will make a statement.

110. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what formula his Department will use in deciding the funding of schools which choose to opt out; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The financial arrangements for grant-maintained schools were set out in the Education (Grant-Maintained Schools) (Finance) Regulations 1989 (S.I., 1989/1287). These arrangements were explained in the Department's circular No. 21/89, issued on 23 August 1989, copies of which have been placed in the Library. A number of representations were received from schools, local education authorities and others in response to the Department's earlier consultation paper on these matters, issued on 10 March, and these were taken into account in preparing the regulations and circular mentioned earlier.

Health Education

33. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he intends to announce the education support grant allocations for local education authorities' preventive health education work.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend is considering the bids submitted for this and other education support grant activities in 1990-91, and intends to announce allocations around the turn of the year.

Human Genome Organisation

34. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what contribution he plans to make to the Human Genome Organisation in 1989-90 and in each of the following four financial years.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Carlisle (Mr. Martlew) on 6 November at col. *422*.

53. **Mr. Terry Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment he has made of the clinical and scientific importance of the research objectives of the Human Genome Organisation.

Mr. Jackson: The target of obtaining a complete map —and eventually perhaps a complete nucleotide sequence —of the human genome is supported by the Medical Research Council; and my right hon. Friend allocated funds earlier in the year for the council's activities in this field, which will link with related international research. The Human Genome Organisation (HUGO) is an independent international body which includes a number of senior United Kingdom scientists. Neither the Department nor the Medical Research Council has made an assessment specifically of the research objectives of HUGO.

Higher Education Colleges

36. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to conclude consideration of the criteria for conferring polytechnic status upon colleges of higher education.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has asked for views by the end of November on the criteria proposed by the PCFC for designating additional polytechnics. He will wish to consider these views carefully before announcing his final decisions.

Education Inspectors and Advisers

38. **Mr. Faulds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he has taken to bring to the attention of local education authorities the report by the Audit Commission, "Assuring Quality and Education: The Role of Local Education Authority Inspectors and Advisers."

40. **Mr. Murphy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he has taken to bring to the attention of local education authorities the report by the Audit Commission, "Assuring Quality and Education: The Role of Local Education Authority Inspectors and Advisers".

Mrs. Rumbold: The Audit Commission has already sent copies of the report to the local authority associations and every local education authority.

Cross-curricular Issues

39. **Mr. Martyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has responded to the interim report of the National Curriculum Council on cross-curricular issues; and if he will make a statement.

46. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has responded to the interim report of the National Curriculum Council on cross-curricular issues; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The National Curriculum Council published preliminary guidance on cross-curricular issues in a circular about the national curriculum and whole curriculum planning published on 31 October. Copies have been sent to all schools in England. The council plans to develop this guidance in other publications to issue in the coming months.

Single Domain Antibodies

41. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science from which companies staff were seconded to join the team working on single domain antibodies at the Medical Research Council laboratory of molecular biology at Cambridge.

Mr. Jackson: I understand from the Medical Research Council that the team working on single domain antibodies at the Medical Research Council's laboratory of molecular biology at Cambridge did not include staff seconded from companies. However, two of the Medical Research Council scientists working on single domain antibodies hold appointments with the council which are funded by companies (Celltech, United Kingdom; and Behringwerka, Federal Republic of Germany).

84. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what patents have been applied for on single domain antibodies described by Sally Ward and others at the Medical Research Council laboratory at Cambridge in *Nature*, volume 341, pages 544-46 on 12 October.

Mr. Jackson: I understand from the Medical Research Council that patent applications have been filed in respect of work on single domain antibodies carried out at the council's laboratory of molecular biology, Cambridge. Until the patent applications have been published the contents must remain confidential.

Research Councils

42. **Mr. George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what powers he has to prevent research councils funding particular projects and programmes which they believe worthy of support within the financial resources available to them.

64. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what powers he has to give directions to research councils.

Mr. Jackson: Section 2 of the Science and Technology Act 1965 empowers my right hon. Friend to give mandatory directions to any of the research councils as regards the use and expenditure of funds provided from the Exchequer.

80. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which research councils are primarily responsible for research into the respective roles of the atmosphere, the oceans and the land in the global environment.

Mr. Jackson: Research into the global environment cannot be divided into the respective roles of the atmosphere, the oceans and the land because the interactions between these systems are crucial. The primary responsibility for such research rests with the Natural Environment Research Council. The Science and

Engineering Research Council is involved in basic research and technology development in atmospheric and ocean science. The Agricultural and Food Research Council is concerned with land studies and the impact of global change. The Economic and Social Research Council and the Medical Research Council are also concerned with the impacts of global change.

91. **Mr. Coulas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met the Advisory Board for the Research Councils; and what was discussed.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has had a number of meetings with the chairman of the ABRC, Sir David Phillips, most recently on 8 November. They have discussed a number of matters concerning the research councils, particularly their funding.

My right hon. Friend hopes to meet the full board within the next two months.

Capitation Allowances

44. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what capitation allowance per pupil is received by *(a)* grant-maintained schools and *(b)* schools in the maintained sector.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The items of expenditure covered by the term "capitation allowance" can vary from LEA to LEA. Accordingly, the Department does not collect data on the size of the allowances made by each LEA to the schools it maintains. Nor is there any element corresponding to a capitation allowance separately identified within the grant which the Department makes to grant-maintained schools.

Undergraduates

48. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the number of first-year undergraduates entering institutions of higher education *(a)* this and *(b)* last autumn; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: Provisional figures indicate that there were 176,000 United Kingdom-domiciled initial entrants to full-time and sandwich first degree and sub-degree higher education courses in Great Britain in autumn 1988. Preliminary indications are that this autumn's figures will be up to 10,000 higher. This is part of a wider and continuing trend which shows the success of the Government's education policies.

Schools (Repairs)

50. **Mr. Madel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that expenditure on repairs to school buildings will be adequate in the next three years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend will be announcing at the time of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement the capital funding that will be available for schools within the Government's expenditure plans for 1990-91 to 1992-93. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment announced on 6 November the Government's proposals for the local authority grant settlement for 1990-91, including current spending on education. Those proposals allow for significant increases in spending on school repairs and maintenance relative to that assumed in the comparable total for 1989-90.

87. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make extra funds immediately available to Bradford education authority to repair and renovate schools within the district; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Bradford local education authority has received an allocation for prescribed expenditure for 1989-90 and it is for the authority to decide how to use the resources available to it in the light of local needs and priorities. Annual capital guidelines for education expenditure in 1990-91 are currently being considered and my right hon. Friend expects to be in a position to announce these in December.

Charities

51. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received from charities expressing concern over the UFC's proposals for charities to supply funding for university overheads.

Mr. Jackson: Neither the UFC nor the Government have any current proposals to change the basis on which charities provide support for university research or other activities. Nor are there any proposals to reduce the present level of public funding provided indirectly through UFC block grant to underpin university research projects sponsored by charities. My right hon. Friend has received two letters opposing such non-existent proposals.

School Governors

52. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will issue guidance on the circumstances in which a local authority can remove its politically appointed school governors from school governing bodies, before their term of office has expired, in the light of the Haberdashers' Aske's case.

Mrs. Rumbold: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for the Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) on 9 November at column *735-36*.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to introduce legislation to allow school governors time off work with pay in order to perform their functions as governors; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has no such plans. School governors are generally entitled to reasonable time off from their employment to fulfil their duties. Many employers already acknowledge the value of the work of governors by granting paid leave. We very much welcome this and are working to encourage other employers to follow their example. But we believe that this is a matter best resolved between employer and employee, rather than by legislation.

Astrophysics

54. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what response he has made to the proposal for co-operation in an International Institute for Astrophysics by all the major countries, in the earliest stages of formulating programmes in astrophysical research, which would be beyond the resources of any one group of nations.

83. **Mr. Maxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what support he is giving to the proposal in *Nature* on 22 June for an international institute for astrophysics, put forward by a group of astrophysicists from the United States of America, the Soviet Union, Japan and Europe.

Mr. Jackson: I have read with interest the proposal for an international institute of astrophysics, contained in the 22 June 1989 edition of *Nature*. As yet, however, this proposal is still being discussed among scientists and so does not yet call for a Government response.

Supply Teachers

56. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to encourage an increase in the number of supply teachers.

Mr. Alan Howarth: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Maryhill (Mrs. Fyfe) on 9 November at column *738*.

University Funding

59. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the current level of university funding.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend will make a statement shortly when the current public expenditure round has been completed.

AIDS

65. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science by what powers he prevented the economic and social research council supporting the survey of sexual behaviour proposed for the study of the epidemiology of AIDS.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend did not exercise any power to prevent the Economic and Social Research Council from supporting the survey and the council did not seek our advice on this. It decided not to proceed following the Government's decision not to provide financial support from the Department of Health's research programme.

Science Budget

69. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what advice he has received from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils on the science budget for 1990-91.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend last received formal advice from the ABRC on the science budget for the years 1990-91 to 1992-93 on 12 May 1989. That advice was published and copies are available in the Library.

99. **Dr. Bray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to reply to the advice of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils on the science budget for 1990-91; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend will be making a statement shortly.

107. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science by how much the increase in the gross domestic product deflator in the latest available quarter over the corresponding quarter in the previous year, has exceeded the increase assumed by the Advisory Board for the Research Councils in its advice on the allocation of the science budget dated 13 December 1988 of an increase in the science budget in real terms in 1989-90 of 11 per cent.

Mr. Jackson: Forecasts of the GDP deflator are usually published on two occasions each year—in the "Financial Statement and Budget Report" and the Autumn Statement. The forecast GDP deflator for 1989-90 over 1988-89 at the time of the ABRC's advice was five per cent. as given in the 1988 Autumn Statement. The figure was subsequently revised to 5·5 per cent. in the 1989 "Financial Statement and Budget Report."

Science and Engineering

71. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of higher education qualifications are awarded in science and engineering subjects; and what are the comparable figures for the major European Commission countries.

Mr. Jackson: The readily available information is as follows:

Higher education qualifications awarded in sciences and engineering
Percentage of all qualifications

Country	*Year obtained*	*Sciences*[1]	*Engineering*[2]
France	1982	16	12
Germany[3]	1983	7	[4]15
Italy	1984	13	7
Netherlands	1982	5	15
United Kingdom[5]	1984	14	16
	1987	15	14

Source: Statistical Bulletin 4/87.

[1] Excluding medicine.

[2] Including trade, craft and industry.

[3] 12 per cent. of qualifications, mainly at sub degree higher education level, are not classified by subject, so that the figures for Germany are probably understated.

[4] Sub degree higher education qualifications estimated from enrolments data.

[5] Including estimates of qualifications awarded to students for professional qualifications in public sector colleges. Excluding private sector.

Vice-Chancellors

78. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met the Committee of Vice-Chancellors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie) on 2 November at column *274*.

Teachers (Re-entrants)

79. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to encourage qualified teachers who are no longer teaching back into the profession.

82. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has to encourage qualified teachers who are no longer teaching back into the profession.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Our proposed education support grant programme for 1990-91 includes support for expenditure of over £2 million on local recruitment measures to attract back more former teachers and to recruit mature entrants. Activities supported by this programme will build on considerable success: over half of all entrants to teaching in recent years have been former serving teachers returning to the classroom.

Civil Scientific Research

81. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what further plans he has to promote and finance further civil scientific research and development; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend will be making an announcement about the future levels of funding of the science budget shortly.

Assisted Places

85. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the Association of County Councils to discuss the availability of local education authority grants and facilities to children on the assisted places scheme attending independent schools and city technology colleges.

Mr. Alan Howarth: No.

Global Environment

89. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on arrangements for the co-ordination of research into the global environment.

109. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he is responsible for the co-ordination of research into the global environment.

Mr. Jackson: Research into the global environment embraces a wide range of work supported by the research councils and a number of other agencies. A correspondingly wide range of co-ordinating arrangements exist, at scientific level; between scientists, the research councils or other supporting agencies, and relevant Government Departments, and internationally. In the light of the pace of developments in this field, both in the United Kingdom and abroad, co-ordination arrangements are kept under regular review. As part of this process, consideration is currently being given to the creation of improved mechanisms for co-ordination.

Bus Passes

94. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance is offered to local authorities by his Department concerning the issuance of bus passes to school children; and what are the regulations governing such issuance.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Under section 55(1) of the Education Act 1944 it is for local education authorities to judge whether it is necessary to make arrangements to facilitate the attendance of pupils at schools. Transport provided under such arrangements must be free of charge. Section 55(2) provides a discretionary power for authorities to pay the whole or part of the travel expenses in other cases. There are no relevant regulations. No guidance has been issued on the specific question of bus passes, but a DES circular letter of 15 December 1981 set out the Secretary of State's views on school transport and travel expenses in the light of the 1980 Education Act's provisions on choice of school. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

GCSE

95. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received on the results of the GCSE examinations in schools and colleges in the year ending 1988-89 assessment year.

Mrs. Rumbold: As in previous years, my right hon. Friend and I have received a number of letters from Members of Parliament, parents and teachers about the summer 1989 GCSE results, though significantly fewer than in 1988, the first year of the GCSE.

Hackney

96. **Ms. Abbott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he next plans to visit Hackney.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has not so far received an invitation to visit Hackney, but we intend to visit as many of the inner London boroughs as possible before next April.

Service Children

98. **Mr. Key:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he has had regarding the education of the children of service personnel.

Mr. Alan Howarth: None.

Education (Inner London)

113. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will make a statement on the state of preparations of the London boroughs to take over the responsibilities of the Inner London education authority in 1988.

Mrs. Rumbold: The inner London councils continue to make progress in setting up their education departments in readiness for the transfer of responsibilities on 1 April 1990. Certain local education authority functions were transferred to the councils on 1 August and 1 September 1989.

Drug Abuse

115. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he is taking to ensure that schools teach young people about the dangers of drug abuse.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Under the national curriculum children will be taught about the harmful effects of drugs and other substances. In addition, the important cross-curricular topics of health education and personal and social education will help equip young people with the skills and attitudes they need to resist pressures to misuse drugs, and to lead healthy lives.

School Places

116. **Mr. Spearing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to improve the formulas used or criteria adopted in his calculation of the likely need for school places in areas of rapidly growing population.

Mr. Alan Howarth: It is for local education authorities to calculate the likely need for school places in areas of rapidly growing population.

Nottingham CTC

117. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the exclusion from Nottinghamshire county council music and dance facilities of children attending the state-maintained Nottingham city technology college.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend remains most concerned about these cases; my hon. Friend will shortly receive a letter from the Department on the subject.

Clerical Assistants (Schools)

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the rate of pay of clerical assistants in *(a)* high schools, *(b)* middle schools and *(c)* first schools.

Mrs. Rumbold: School clerical assistants are usually paid on the local government administrative, professional, technical and clerical spine, the precise rate of pay being determined in the light of local circumstances and priorities.

School Duties

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what time is assessed as being required for *(a)* curriculumn responsibilities, *(b)* pastoral duties, *(c)* record keeping, *(d)* assessment and moderating and *(e)* classroom preparation at each age band of primary and secondary education; and what proportion of teaching and general costs have been allocated to each such band.

Mrs. Rumbold: Teachers are required to be available for work for 195 days in any year of which 190 days shall be days on which they may be required to teach pupils, and to perform such duties at such times and such places as may be specified by the head teacher for 1,265 hours in any year. The allocation of resources to individual schools is a matter for local education authorities.

Portage Schemes

Mr. Speller: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he aims to achieve comprehensive geographical coverage for portage schemes; and how many such schemes operate in the county of Devon.

Mr. Alan Howarth: Between 1986 and 1989, pump-priming funds to provide portage were offered to every LEA in England, though the education support grant (ESG); 89 out of 97 LEAs took it up. Although no new ESG funds for portage are available, LEAs are encouraged to develop further schemes themselves. There is one scheme in the county of Devon.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mrs. Rumbold: The main changes to the collection of regular statistics and to their publication are as follows:

	Collection
SCHOOLS	
Pupils	
Form 7	
Information on the curriculum needs and aspects of disability of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Collection discontinued w.e.f. 1989
Data for pupils by age as at 31 December	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1980
Data for pupils by age and course of study (cross-analysis)	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1983
Teachers	
Form 618G	
September return	Stopped w.e.f. September 1987
DTR based tables:	
(a) Number of students entering ITT	Not published w.e.f. 1988 but data available except for item (c)
(b) Number of students attending courses for qualified teachers	
(c) Full-time teachers in direct grant Grammar schools	
(d) Teachers in independent schools	
(e) Teachers Superannuation	
Exams	
Surveys of Examining Boards	Ceased after 1985 survey
Educational buildings	
Form ABB 30	
Data on the annual progress report on educational buildings in each LEA	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1989
FHE	
Students	
FESR data for Wales	Collection and publication ceased after 1980 (transfer of responsibility to the Secretary of State for Wales)
FE Examinations entries and passes	Not published in the FE Volume since 1979
Statistics of ITT students in University Departments of Education	Not included in 1986 and 1987 editions of FE Statistics Volume, due to problems arising from a switch in data source. Publication to be recommenced in 1988 Volume
Residential students	
FSHR Survey	
Number of HE and FE full-time and sandwich course students in halls of residence at polytechnics and other FHE institutions	Collection ceased after the November 1987 survey

	Collection
Students Staff ratios	
Annual Monitoring Survey	
Collection of data by Burnham category	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1988-89
FE Revenue	
FE Revenue Accounts Survey	
Separate data for gas, electricity, solid fuel and fuel oil	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1987-88
Student awards	
Form 503G	
Data in respect of discretionary award holders under Section 1(6) and Section (2) of the 1962 Education Act as amended:	
(a) by status and rate of grant	Collection and publication ceased w.e.f. 1983-84
(b) married, independent and staying outside the United Kingdom	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1983-84
(c) numbers in receipt of all additional allowances	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1983-84
Separate data on women students for (a) and (b) above and for mandatory award holders	Collection and publication ceased w.e.f. 1983-84
Data for:	
(a) mandatory awards for married and independent students studying permanently outside the United Kingdom	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1984-85
(b) numbers in receipt of dependents allowances by sex	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1984-85
(c) numbers in receipt of lesser-value awards by sex	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1984-85
(d) number of nil award-holders in receipt of free board and lodging	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1984-85
(e) number of full-value award holders in the polytechnics and colleges sector for whom no fees were paid by the LEA	Collection ceased w.e.f. 1984-85

Greenways School, Liverpool

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the future of Greenways school, Grassendale, Liverpool, and the provision of special education in that city.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The Liverpool local education authority published a preliminary report on special educational provision in the city in June. That report recommends the closure of Greenways and White Thorn special schools, and the establishment of three new nursery/infant assessment units. However, no formal proposals under section 14 of the Education Act 1981 have as yet been received by the Secretary of State in respect of the closure of these schools.

Education Spending (Northumberland)

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much money was spent per pupil in Northumberland on *(a)* special education, *(b)* primary schools, *(c)* secondary schools and *(d)* tertiary education in each year from 1978-79 to the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The available information is given in the table.

Net institutional expenditure[1] per pupil[2]—cash terms Northumberland

	Primary £	*Secondary* £	*Special* £
1978-79	415	575	n.a.
1979-80	425	580	n.a.
1980-81	530	710	n.a.
1981-82	600	770	n.a.
1982-83	655	845	2,890
1983-84	690	925	3,315
1984-85	720	1,000	3,800
1985-86	755	1,075	4,325
1986-87	840	1,230	4,700
1987-88	945	1,390	5,570

Separate figures are not available for tertiary education which forms part of maintained further education.

[1] Net Institutional Expenditure includes the cost of salaries and wages, premises and certain supplies and services. It does not include the cost of school meals, central administration and inspection, debt charges or revenue contributions to capital outlay.

[2] The figures are bases on LEA expenditure returns to DoE and pupil number returns to DES.

School Teachers

Mr Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education And Science what has been the number of teachers from Europe who have been appointed to schools in England and Wales during the last six months due to teacher shortages.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information is not available in the form requested but a total of 249 teachers from EC countries were accorded qualified teacher status in the period 1 May to 31 October.

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list all measures which have been taken since 1987 to increase the supply of school teachers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The principal measures taken since 1987 to increase the supply of teachers are as follows:

1. Bursary schemes for trainee teachers in maths, physics, CDT and (from 1989) chemistry.
2. Support for new initiatives in higher education institutions and the Open university for new types of initial teacher training and conversion courses.
3. The setting up of the TASC (teacher as a career unit to promote career and improve recruitment practices among local education authorities and initial teacher training institutions.
4. The support of publicity and advertising campaigns organised by

TASC.

5. The introduction of new routes to teaching, including the licensed teacher and the articled teacher schemes.
6. The provision of education support grant as pump-priming support for LEA's local initiatives to improve the recruitment of new teachers not currently in service.
7. The provision of taster courses about teaching as a career for mature people seeking a new career in teaching.
8. The provision of funding through LEA training grants scheme for retraining courses to increase the supply of teachers in shortage subjects.

We shall continue and intensify our efforts to meet the demands of schools in the 1990s.

Disabled Students Allowance

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many local education authorities pay the disabled students allowance retrospectively.

Mr. Jackson: The disabled students allowance is available as part of the grant under the mandatory awards regulations for a student who, as a result of his disability, is obliged to incur extra expenditure (other than travel expenses which are provided for separately) in attending his course. It is for the local education authority to assess the amount it considers appropriate up to the ceiling specified in the regulations, and to decide how and when to make grant payments. In practice assessments are often likely to take account of expenditure already incurred, but the Department does not collect detailed information on authorities' procedures.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether his Department has carried out any research into the adequacy of the disabled students allowance for meeting the additional costs incurred by disabled students.

Mr. Jackson: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply I gave on 13 November to my right hon. Friend for Exeter Mr. Hannam.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether his Department has carried out any research into the possible effects of a loans system on disabled students and prospective students with disabilities.

Mr. Jackson: The top-up loans scheme is designed to provide an additional source of support for all students.

School Buildings, Derbyshire

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will announce his decision on the revised bid for capital spending on school buildings submitted by Derbyshire county council in connection with its post-primary reorganisation plans for the Chesterfield and north-east Derbyshire areas.

Mr. Alan Howarth: My right hon. Friend hopes to announce his decisions on the distribution of annual capital guidelines to LEAs before Christmas. Derbyshire county council's capital expenditure plans for 1990-91 are currently under consideration and it is impossible to say what Derbyshire's annual capital guideline for education is likely to be. I should, however, point out that annual capital guidelines are unhypothecated and therefore it is for the individual authority to determine, in the light of local needs and circumstances, which projects it should undertake.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mrs. Rumbold: To date, the Department has received 742 oral and 1,579 written questions.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mrs. Rumbold: It is the Department's policy to answer all written parliamentary questions tabled to my right hon. Friend, unless the information can be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89;

(2) how many written parliamentary questions to him in session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate expense.

Teachers' Pay

58. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he has had with the interim advisory committee on teachers' pay; and whether he will make a statement.

102. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what discussions he has had with the interim advisory committee on teachers' pay; and whether he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend has had no discussions with the IAC. Officials from the Department gave oral evidence to the committee on 9 November.

62. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received on current procedure for the settlement of salaries and conditions for teachers; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend is currently engaged in a series of meetings with the teacher unions and the employers at which a range of possibilities for new permanent pay determination arrangements is being discussed.

88. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether his Department has had any correspondence with Cheshire county council concerning the pay of home tutors and supply teachers.

Mrs. Rumbold: No. Local education authorities have certain discretions under the school teachers' pay and conditions document 1989 to pay teachers on short-notice contracts at rates they consider appropriate in order to recruit and retain sufficient teachers of the right quality.

92. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy that the element within rate support grant for school teachers' pay within any new pay determination machinery be determined solely on the merits of the case for teachers' pay.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend is at present discussing with unions and employers what form the new pay determination machinery should take. The implications for annual local authority spending settlements will be considered during those discussions.

93. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the progress of his plans to introduce a new teachers' pay negotiating body.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend is currently engaged in a series of meetings with the teacher unions and the employers at which a range of possibilities for new permanent pay determination arrangements is being discussed.

108. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what in real terms, was headteachers' pay in 1979 and in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mrs. Rumbold: The average pay of a headteacher in April 1989 was £18,883 in the primary sector and £26,185 in the secondary sector. The equivalent figures for 1979 (in real terms) were £14,841 and £19,875 respectively.

Tuition Fees

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what detailed arrangements he now proposes for implementing increased tuition fees in higher education in 1990-91.

Mr. MacGregor: We have already announced that the maximum tuition fee for most first degree and designated comparable courses in publicly-funded institutions which will be reimbursed through mandatory student awards will be £1,675 from September 1990. In order to ensure that public funds are not provided in advance of need, I have decided that this tuition fee should be paid in termly instalments rather than in a single annual payment as at present. The funding councils will also adjust the profile of their recurrent grant instalments to institutions so that the combined flow of fee and grant income more closely matches institutions' spending patterns during the year. The changes have been discussed with representatives of the local authorities and the institutions, and we shall now consult further about the detailed arrangements for the termly fee payments.

I have also considered what fee levels would be appropriate for reimbursement through mandatory awards for courses where a student spends at least a year away from an institution—for example students on thick sandwich courses or spending a year as foreign language assistants. In these cases, the costs to the institution are usually less during the year away than for the main part of the course. I have decided that the maximum fee reimbursed in such cases should be half the standard tuition fee.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 15 November 1989

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

County Courts

Sir Hugh Rossi: To ask the Attorney-General what steps are being taken by the Lord Chancellor to correct the delays and errors in the county courts.

The Attorney-General: Delays are occurring in some county courts because of staffing difficulties in conjunction with an overall increase of 6·5 per cent. in workload. An additional £2 million has recently been allocated to the court service, which includes county courts, from within departmental resources to stabilise staff numbers and maintain performance at the required level. The position will be kept under review to see if further action is required.

A level of checking is required by the Department which is intended to keep errors to a minimum and is the responsibility of local supervisory staff.

Legislation

Sir Hugh Rossi: To ask the Attorney-General whether the Lord Chancellor will consider publishing a Green Paper on the subject of the drafting of legislation, its scrutiny and subsequent interpretation, following his rejection of the proposal for the scrutiny of selected Bills by High Court judges contained in the petition to this House on 17 April by George Bednar.

The Attorney-General: The drafting of legislation is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend, the Lord President of the Council. The Lord Chancellor has no plans to publish a Green Paper on this subject.

House of Fraser

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the progress of consideration by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the director of the serious fraud office of the inspector's report on the takeover of the House of Fraser and the contents of the book entitled "A Hero From Zero."

The Attorney-General: I refer the hon. Member to my reply given on 6 November 1989 to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor).

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Assessments

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what requests he has received for the issue of environmental impact assessments of planning applications for quarries of areas exceeding 50 hectares; what action he has taken in each instance; and if he will make a statement concerning any refusals he has made.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to the hon. Member.

Planning Law

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what changes he proposes to existing planning law.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Containers

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he intends to take to encourage the use of bottles and other returnable containers.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: We will continue to encourage the reuse and recycling of bottles and other containers through a combination of improved collection and separation facilities, raising public awareness and urging manufacturers and retailers to take account of environmental considerations in the design and production of containers. Our proposals to introduce new arrangements for waste disposal and management will, among other things, help to identify the costs of disposal to landfill and incineration and the benefits of reuse and recycling.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish *(a)* his latest estimates of the total numbers of people who will be exempt from the poll tax, *(b)* the estimates for each category of exempt persons, *(c)* the exact mechanism for applying these figures to the calculation of relevant population for each local authority, and *(d)* the procedure for reimbursing local authorities for poll tax forgone due to exemptions.

Mr. David Hunt: The table provides the figures requested.

On 6 November the Secretary of State placed in the Library a draft population report which sets out his proposals for calculating relevant population. It is the Government's intention that relevant population should be based on the number of people shown in community charge registers on 1 December 1989 as being subject to a personal community charge. Our estimates of numbers exempt do not feature in this calculation, except if community charge registration officers do not return the necessary information to my Department in time, or in other circumstances as specified in the draft population report.

Revenue support grant will be paid to each receiving authority to ensure that if all local authorities spend at the level of their standard spending assessment, the community charge could be set at the same level in each area regardless of the number exempt. The grant calculation assumes that the community charge is paid only by the relevant population, which excludes exempt people.

Assumed number exempt in England
(Rounded to nearest hundred)

	Number
Residents in hospitals or homes	400,000
Persons in detention	46,800
18 and 19 year olds	155,300
Visiting forces	50,800
Severely mentally impaired	160,000

	Number
Others	9,000
Total	821,900

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* recalculations of the tables in annexe J of card 9714 "Paying for Local Government" on the basis of *(a)* his statement and consultation papers of 6 November, but without his scheme of transitional relief and *(b)* his statement and consultation papers of 6 November, including his scheme of transitional relief; and if he will make a statement of the effect of his scheme of transitional relief on the pattern of gainers and losers under the poll tax.

Mr. David Hunt: Updated estimates of the distributional impact of the new system of local government finance will be provided shortly. These figures will include the impact of the transitional relief scheme.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the community charge liability of *(a)* deaf and blind adults living at home with their parents and *(b)* deaf and blind adults living in residential institutions.

Mr. Chope: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will show for each charging authority area the difference between their actual level of expenditure in 1989-90 and the level assumed for calculating grant in the 1989-90 RSG settlement, expressed both in £ million and £ per adult, using the most recently assessed figure for relevant population.

Mr. David Hunt: I have today placed the available information in the Library.

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will show for each local authority the budgeted increase or reduction in financial reserves for 1989-90, expressed both in £ million and £ per adult, using the most recently assessed figure for relevant population.

Mr. David Hunt: I have today placed the available information in the Library.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the estimated amounts and the proportion these represent of total local government spending in England for *(a)* all grant towards local government spending from the Exchequer, *(b)* the total raised by non-domestic rates and *(c)* the total raised by domestic rates for each year since 1982.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is as follows:

Year	Net domestic rate income	Per cent.	Net non-domestic rate income	Per cent.	All Government grants	Per cent.
1982-83	4,548	13	5,685	17	13,697	40
1983-84	4,382	12	6,042	17	15,985	44
1984-85	4,707	12	6,361	17	16,717	43
1985-86	5,094	13	6,740	17	17,246	43
1986-87	5,912	14	7,566	18	17,773	42
1987-88	6,539	14	8,088	18	18,624	41

Notes:

1. Percentages shown represent proportions of gross expenditure; that is, both current and capital expenditure. The other major sources of income are fees and charges and borrowing. 1987-88 is the most recent year for which this data is available.
2. Domestic rate income is shown net of rate relief grant and net of rate rebate grants.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has reached conclusions on definitions on disability for community charge concessions and, in particular, with reference to blind people; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The community charge transitional relief scheme will contain special provision for disabled people who are not former ratepayers or the partners of former ratepayers. A person will be regarded as disabled for the purpose of this scheme if he or she is in receipt of attendance allowance, mobility allowance, mobility supplement, invalidity pension, or severe disablement allowance; or is registered blind.

Arsenal-Norwich Football Match

Mr. John Carlisle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the Football Association and the Football League following the scenes of disorder on the pitch during the match between Arsenal and Norwich on Saturday 4 November.

Mr. Moynihan: At my request, officials at my Department discussed the incident with the Football Association on 6 November, since early press reports suggested that the association was unable to take action. We were informed that those reports were misleading. During the afternoon, the Football Association charged both clubs with misconduct and with bringing the game into disrepute.

Minister for Sport (Football Matches)

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many football matches the Minister for Sport has attended since becoming Minister for Sport; and on what date he last attended a League Division fixture.

Mr. Moynihan: I have attended 27 league, cup and international football matches since my appointment as Minister for Sport. The last Football League fixture I attended was the match between Tottenham Hotspur and Queens Park Rangers on 30 September 1989.

River Mersey (Pollution)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the companies currently given deemed consent to pollute the River Mersey, stating what pollutants they are empowered to discharge; and on what scale;

(2) what fines were levied on companies and individuals responsible for polluting the River Mersey over the past 10 years.

Mr. Howard: I will write to the hon. Member.

Homelessness

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what direct consultation is taking place between his Department and organisations working with homeless people in its review of homelessness; and when the results of the review will be published.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend announced the conclusions of the review on Wednesday 15 November. In conducting the review, we have appreciated the advice and information which organisations working with homeless people were able to give us.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has completed his review of the homelessness legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: We are publishing the full conclusions of our review of the homelessness legislation today, and copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

Our review has looked at the role and purpose of the homelessness legislation and at its effects. The legislation —now part III of the Housing Act 1985—was enacted in 1977 as the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, an all-party measure. Briefly, it requires local housing authorities to find accommodation for people they judge to be homeless according to the criteria specified in the Act.

We believe that the Act remains important, as a "long stop" measure to help people in need who have become homeless through no fault of their own. The present terms of the Act strike a reasonable balance between the interests of the genuinely homeless and others in housing need. We do not intend therefore to change the law, but we have proposals to make it work better.

We have also concluded that local councils remain the right bodies to take the lead responsibility in helping homeless people; and some of them are very good at it. However, it is clear from my Department's research and other reports that there is room for improvement. Some councils need to be much faster processing applications, for example; some need to try harder to keep families out of temporary accommodation like bed and breakfast; and in general all councils ought to aim for a better, more consistent service. I propose to amend the code of guidance (to which councils must have regard) and my Department will shortly put a draft out for consultation.

The pressures of homelessness vary around the country. Statistics are neither as reliable nor as sensitive as I would like. For example, those figures most quoted—the numbers of homeless acceptances—can be affected as much by local policy as by real needs. But it is apparent that the problems are concentrated in London and the south-east. I propose to designate those regions as "pressure areas" and to target to them additional resources and help. In particular, we are providing an extra £250 million for these areas over the next two years—£148 million next year, and £102 million in 1991-92—to help councils and housing associations provide more homes for homeless people. This £250 million is on top of the major increase in the Housing Corporation's programme which will be more than doubled from £815 million this year to £1,736 million in 1992-93. We are reviewing with the Housing Corporation and the National Federation of Housing Associations how this programme can best be distributed to make the maximum impact on housing need, including homelessness.

We must also make the most of the housing we already have; and this means effective management. Councils and housing associations have empty houses they must bring into use and the extra resources will help where necessary. Helping tenants to move, where they want to, is also important especially if this frees vacancies in the pressure areas. I will provide 100 per cent. funding and support for a new mobility organisation, formed from the three existing bodies, to provide a better targeted service.

I will continue to encourage the important contribution of the voluntary sector and greatly increased grant aid will be available from next year for homelessness projects. We also want to stop people becoming homeless, as well as helping them when they have got to crisis point. Good practical advice can be vital and I want to set up a comprehensive, national service. Urgent discussions will be held with the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux and other voluntary bodies.

There is concern—which we share—about proper protection and help for young people who leave home and come to live in our inner cities. This affects the responsibilities of a number of Departments, which are reviewing at present the way their policies work together. The Government will make further announcements about this soon.

We believe it is essential to make this concentrated attack on the problems of homelessness, but these must not be regarded as separate issues, outside the scope of housing policies in general. We cannot just try to treat symptoms, when causes lie deeper. The real and long-term remedies are to be found in an effective housing strategy, based on the contributions of the private and the public sectors, on the harnessing of the market to deliver opportunities and choice, on the targeting of resources to meet needs and on the efficient management of the stock. That is the strategy of the Government and we shall pursue it vigorously for the benefit of the community and those who are homeless or in need.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the annual cost of keeping a homeless family in hotel accommodation in *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1988 and *(c)* 1989.

Mr. Chope: The estimate of the average annual cost of keeping a household in bed and breakfast accommodation based on figures provided by English local authorities to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in 1985-86 is £9,500 (£7,000 net of offsetting income such as DSS allowances). For 1987-88 the estimate is £12,500 (£9,500 net of offsetting income). Figures for 1988-89 are not yet available. There is a wide range of costs for authorities in different areas.

Dumping of Chemicals

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with member states of the European Community regarding the illegal dumping of dangerous chemicals at sea; and whether he will propose amendments to the flag of convenience system to take into account the level of dumping.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to the hon. Member.

Pollution (Prosecutions)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many companies responsible for pollution have been successfully prosecuted over the past 10 years; and what were the total of fines imposed.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Information on prosecutions in respect of offences under legislation controlling polluting activities in the form requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Some information is published in the annual "Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics", and other public sources.

Air Pollution

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment at how many sites in London are pollutant levels of air monitored; for each of the last five years, on how may days air at each of these sites failed to meet the World Health Organisation safety level for *(a)* carbon monoxide; *(b)* nitrogen oxides and *(c)* ozone.

Mr. Trippier: The Warren Spring laboratory monitors air pollution in London for my Department. The number of sites and their results are summarised as follows:

Pollutant	*Number of sites*
Lead	3
Black smoke/sulphur dioxide	[1]48
	[2]24
Nitrogen dioxide	3
Carbon monoxide	2
Ozone	1

[1] 1984-85.
[2] 1988-89.

The World Health Organisation has published guideline values (not safety levels), which were exceeded on the numbers of occasions shown as follows:

(a) Carbon monoxide

	1 hour guideline (25 ppm)	*8 hour guideline (10 ppm)*
[1]1985-86	none	none
1986-87	none	none
1987-88	none	none
1988-89	none	1 at site 1
[2]1989	none	1 at site 2

(b) Nitrogen dioxide

	1 hour guideline (210 ppb)	*24 hour guideline (80 ppb)*
[3]1985	3 at site 2	10 at site 2
[3]1986	none	2 at site 1
		11 at site 2
[4]1987	1 at site 1	6 at site 1
	1 at site 3	4 at site 2
[4]1988	none	5 at site 1
		7 at site 3
		3 at site 1
[3]1989	1 at site 2	9 at site 2
	7 at site 3	6 at site 3

(c) Ozone

	1 hour guideline (76 ppb)	*24 hour guideline (50 ppb)*
1985	14	35
1986	6	12
1987	0	5
1988	1	1
[2]1989	6	17

[1] Year April to March.
[2] Results to 13 November 1989.
[3] No measurements made at site 3.
[4] No measurements made at site 2.

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the estimated total daily weight of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide pollutants emitted by road traffic in Greater London on a typical Friday in *(a)* 1984, *(b)* 1989, *(c)* 1994, and *(d)* 1999.

Mr. Trippier: Warren Spring laboratory has provided the following estimates assuming the London annual total emission from road transport to be 7·55 per cent. of the United Kingdom total, and assuming Friday emissions to be 0·288 per cent. of the annual total.

Typical 1984 Friday emissions; NO_x, 200 tonnes;
CO, 838 tonnes.

Corresponding data are not yet available for 1989. The Department is currently revising its projections of future vehicle emissions in the light of the recent EC agreement on tighter emission standards and other developments, and I regret that the information sought for 1994 and 1999 is therefore also not at present available.

Regional Rivers Advisory Committees

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the name of the nominating body for all of those who have so far been appointed to the regional rivers advisory committees in England and Wales.

Mr. Howard: I will write to the hon. Member.

Information Services

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will differentiate between the roles of the European Environmental Statistics Office, the Corine programme and the proposed European-environment monitoring and information network.

Mr. Trippier: The role of the Statistical Office of the European Communities is to collect, co-ordinate and disseminate statistics to assist in the formulation and monitoring of a wide range of Community policies. The office is mainly concerned with economic and social statistics; its programme of work on environmental statistics has only just begun.

The Corine programme is an experimental project run by the European Commission to assemble information on

environmental topics that can be mapped and tabulated using geographic information systems as a management tool.

The role of the proposed European Environment Agency and the European environment monitoring and information network is to provide the Commission and member states with objective environmental information and analysis. Where necessary the agency will draw on the work of the Statistical Office to avoid duplication of effort and the Corine-related work will pass to the agency if and when it is established in due course.

Rented Housing

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a further statement on his policy regarding the provision of low-cost rented accommodation and the measures which he has already taken in this respect.

Mr. Chope: The Government have taken a variety of measures to encourage the supply of rented housing, including the deregulation of private letting, the encouragement of private investment in housing associations and a major increase in public funding through the Housing Corporation for new rented housing development by housing associations. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement today gives details of our plans for further investment in low-cost rented housing over the next three years.

Liverpool (Budget Deficit)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from Liverpool city council requesting assistance in meeting its budget deficit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I am not aware of any. It is the responsibility of the city council to take appropriate action to bring its revenue account into balance.

Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth may expect a reply to his letter of 26 June referring to Mr. A. S. Johnson of 56 School street, Hillmorton.

Mr. Chope: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Short-life Housing

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has studied the recent decision of the Court of Appeal in the case of Family Housing Association *v.* Jones and its implications for the use of short-life empty dwellings by housing associations and local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: It is not possible to assess the full implications of the judgment in this case until it has been fully reported.

Government Car Service

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many official cars there are in the Government car pool, by make and engine capacity; and what is the cost of their repairs and maintenance.

Mr. Chope: The information in respect of official cars in all Government Departments is not available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However in the London Government car service fleet there are currently 186 vehicles of various makes and engine capacities. The cost of maintaining this fleet over the last 12 months was £218,000.

Circulars and Consultation Papers

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the circulars and consultation papers issued to *(a)* county councils, *(b)* metropolitan district councils and *(c)* non-metropolitan district councils since 1 January, together with the dates they were despatched.

Mr. Chris Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

CFCs

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the local authorities in England and Wales which are making arrangements for the recycling of CFC gases from freezers and fridges discarded at their waste sites.

Mr. Trippier: Comprehensive information on local authority facilities to recycle CFCs is not at present available, but my Department is to carry out shortly a survey on this and other aspects of recycling.

Uniform Business Rate

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on discussions held and decisions taken concerning the uniform business rate for nationalised industries; and if he will indicate the anticipated amount to be paid by British Rail in the first year of the uniform business rate.

Mr. David Hunt: My officials have held extensive discussions with representatives of all those industries whose rateable values are to be prescribed by orders made under paragraph 3 of schedule 6 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988, and our proposals for new assessments were contained in a consultation paper issued on 4 October, the responses to which we are now considering. I am placing copies of the consultation paper in the Library. No decisions have yet been taken on the values for these industries. But if our proposed rateable value for British Rail is adopted and assuming the provisional multiplier of 36 pence which my right hon. Friend announced on 6 November, after the application of the transitional arrangements, British Rail's rate bill for property assessed on this basis in England in 1990-91 would be about £57·5 million.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has discussed the implications of the uniform business rate with the Forum of Private Business; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The then Minister for Local Government met Mr. Mendham, the chief executive of the Forum of Private Business, on 5 May 1989 to discuss the business rate. Also officials have had several meetings with Mr. Mendham his year on the same subject.

Council Houses, Chelmsford

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the number of council houses sold to tenants in the Chelmsford local authority area from 3 May 1979 to the latest available date; and what proportion this is of the stock that existed on 3 May 1979.

Mr. Chope: Chelmsford district council is estimated to have sold 3,260 dwellings to its tenants in the period 1 April 1979 to 31 March 1989 (the latest date for which a return has been received). This amounts to some 26 per cent. of its April 1979 stock.

Dolphinaria Report

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if those responsible for supervising and implementing the dolphinaria steering g -up report for new standards for United Kingdom dolphinaria have been informed that the necessary work will be undertaken;

(2) when the new standards for United Kingdom dolphinaria, contained in the dolphinaria steering group report, will be included in the guidance notes for his inspectors.

Mr. Trippier: New draft standards for dolphinaria and the guidance notes for inspectors have been compiled and will be circulated to the appropriate bodies for comment shortly. A number of matters relating to the new standards and the steering group recommendations have raised scientific or technical questions and specialist advice is being sought. Several other items in the dolphinaria steering group report have already been implemented and work on the remainder is in hand.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what action has been taken to implement the recommendations of the dolphinaria steering group report published in 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: One dolphinaria operator has supplied details of his plans for implementation of the new standards. The Department is awaiting replies from the remaining operators. A reminder has been sent.

Dogs

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will bring forward legislation requiring that all dogs for sale carry an identification tag and the tendering of a written specification prior to sale stating the purpose for acquiring a dog; and if he will give district councils the power to operate a neutering service.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: We issued a consultation paper on 10 August which set out a package of measures we propose on dog control. We do not propose to impose the requirements in respect of the sale of dogs suggested by the hon. Member. We believe that some local authorities already subsidise neutering under existing powers.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation requiring dogs to be on leads at all times in public places.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: We are currently reviewing the operation and scope of dog-control byelaws and orders, which include powers requiring dogs to be on leads on highways and other specified areas. The hon. Member's suggestion is one that was made in response to our recent consultation paper on dog control measures and we are considering it as part of our review.

Housing

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what estimates he has made of the demand for housing in the year 2000; and what policies he has initiated to help meet this demand;

(2) when he last met the National Housing Forum; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Chope: I will write to the hon. Member.

Local Plans

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the occasions since 1971 when he or his predecessors have called in a local plan under the provisions currently set out in section 14A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 giving details of the plans concerned and the decision recorded in each case.

Mr. Howard: Since 1971 the following local plans have been called in by the Secretary of State under section 14(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 or section 14A(1) of that Act as substituted by the Housing and Planning Act 1986:

Date of call-in	*Title of plan*	*Decision*
20 February 1985	Berwick upon Tweed Town Local Plan	Approved with modifications
28 January 1986	North Southwark Local Plan	Rejected
23 September 1987	Wimbledon Town Centre Local Plan	Approved with modifications
13 June 1989	Environment and Traffic on the A205 Local Plan (LB Lewisham)	Still before the Secretary of State

A further eight local plans prepared by former metropolitan county councils were called in in 1986 to enable them to be taken forward to approval following the abolition of the counties.

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if the failure of a local planning authority to implement a key recommendation of his inspector, following a local plan inquiry, constitutes grounds for him calling in the plans.

Mr. Moynihan: Authorities are not obliged to accept the inspector's recommendations following a local plan public inquiry, but failure to do so could constitute grounds for intervention by the Secretary of State.

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what criteria he adopts in deciding whether or not to call in a local plan in accordance with the provisions of section 14A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government's policy on calling in local plans is set out in the memorandum on structure and

local plans accompanying DOE circular 22/84. This states that the Secretary of State's call-in power will be used only in a limited range of circumstances where central Government intervention is clearly justified—for instance, where the plan raises issues of national or regional importance or where the plan gives rise to substantial controversy.

Water Standards

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to the number of cases brought against each European Community member state by the Commission for failure to reach European Community standards for *(a)* bathing waters and *(b)* drinking water in each of the past three years; and if he will make a statement regarding cases involving the United Kingdom.

Mr. Howard: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Toxic Waste

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any proposals to improve the effectiveness of the provisions of the Transfrontier Shipment of Hazardous Waste Regulations 1988 in controlling the import and movement of toxic waste in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The regulations enable waste disposal authorities effectively to control imports of hazardous waste. The parent European directive is however to be reviewed in the light of operation experience, revised definitions of hazardous waste and the Basel convention. The Government are contributing fully to the review and have made proposals to reduce the volume of transfrontier shipments and to extend controls. We are considering legislation to enable us to extend controls in the future.

Playgrounds

Mr. Robert G. Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to issue a new code of guidance to local authorities about playground provision and safety; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The Government regard it as essential that playgrounds should be as safe as possible and that children using them should not be at risk of accident. I have asked the national children's play and recreation unit to produce updated guidance on general aspects of play safety, including playground safety. This will make reference to the relevant British Standards and to the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974, which requires local authorities and other playground operators to take reasonable measures to ensure safety in playgrounds which are under their control. We hope to issue this guidance in the spring of next year and copies will be sent to all local authorities and other interested organisations.

House of Commons Accommodation

Mr. Ian Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has yet completed the work to the former Cannon Row police station to provide additional accommodation for the benefit of the House.

Mr. Chope: With the agreement of the Accommodation and Administration Subcommittee No. 1 Cannon row, as it is now known, has been modernised to provide short-term accommodation for the House pending redevelopment of the building as part of the Bridge street redevelopment scheme. I am pleased to advise my hon. Friend that the building is ready for occupation and the first occupants have already moved in.

Battersea Power Station

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied that the listed building status of Battersea power station has not been infringed by work carried out by the current developers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Rent Arrears

Sir Hugh Rossi: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a table of all the London boroughs showing the current level of rent arrears for each of them.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* Local authorities report their rent arrears on their housing subsidy claim forms. A table was placed in the Library on 1 March this year showing rent arrears reported at April 1988 and those arrears as a percentage of rent roll. Figures for April 1989 are not yet available.

London Blenheim Estates Ltd.

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will fix a date earlier than 10 April 1990 for the inquiry into planning appeal reference APP/L5240/A/89/133451, lodged by London Blenheim Estates Ltd. on grounds of non-determination; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* The public local inquiry date of 10 April 1990 is the earliest practicable for this appeal. An earlier date will be offered if or when an inspector becomes available—for example, on the cancellation of an earlier inquiry—provided the local planning authority agrees to the change.

Derbyshire County Council Pension Fund

Mr. Harry Barnes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the recent investigations into the operation of the Derbyshire county council pension fund by the stock exchange and the Takeover Panel.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* This is a matter for the stock exchange and the Takeover Panel. I understand that the latter has stated that it has found no evidence of any breach of the code on the part of either Miss World or Derbyshire county council arising from any connection between them and, accordingly, that it does not intend to take the matter further.

Low-cost Housing

Mr. Ames: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all those measures which have been taken since 1985 to increase the supply of low-cost housing in rural areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* In July 1988 the Government announced their rural housing initiative which for the first time set out a specific policy on low-cost housing in smaller villages. The Housing Corporation established a special rural programme aimed at expanding the role of housing associations in villages with a population of under 1,000. Last Wednesday I invited the Housing Corporation to propose a further increase in this programme to allow 1,000 approvals next year, 1,200 in 1991-92 and 1,500 in 1992-93. I also asked it to separately identify a rural element within its low-cost home ownership programme, to allow 250 approvals next year, 300 in 1991-92 and 350 in 1992-93.

We are introducing a scheme in certain rural areas whereby housing associations can repurchase former shared ownership dwellings at full market value when an occupier moves on. The Housing Corporation will guarantee to make the necessary funds available, without reducing the corporation's rural rented or shared ownership programmes.

Last February we announced changes to planning rules which will enable local planning authorities exceptionally to release small pockets of land, not previously designated for housing, for low cost schemes to meet the needs of local people.

In his Budget statement my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced changes to capital gains and inheritance taxes on land sold at less than best price to registered housing associations.

Tax is now based on the actual proceeds of sale rather than the market value, thereby encouraging landowners to release small units of surplus land for low-cost local needs housing.

In addition rural areas can expect to benefit from the encouragement we have given to private investment in the rented sector through deregulation and the tax incentives available under the business expansion scheme. Areas with shortages of low-cost housing should also benefit from various measures that are being taken to improve the focusing of capital resources, both for local authorities and housing associations, on areas with the greatest needs.

Taken together these measures should make a significant contribution to increasing supply in rural areas with a need for more low-cost housing.

Nitrates

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what research has *(a)* been conducted by his Department and *(b)* been evaluated by his Department that examines the possibility that the intake of nitrates diluted in drinking water is harmful to human health.

Mr. Howard *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Community Charge

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, what is his estimate of the numbers of adult residents of *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* each district council likely to be entitled to the maximum rebate, during the first year of operation of the community charge in England and Wales; and if he will express these figures as a proportion of the estimated population of each local authority liable to community charge.

Mr. Christopher Chope: I will write to the hon. Member.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

East Kilbride Office

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the numbers of jobs in his Department being relocated in the East Kilbride office.

Mrs. Chalker: We have reviewed recently the location of the work of the ODA and have identified a number of functions which might be transferred away from the ODA's London headquarters. About 100 posts are involved, a number of which are currently the subject of more detailed scrutiny. A substantial proportion of these jobs will be transferred to the ODA office in East Kilbride, but the exact number has yet to be decided.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Refugees (Vietnam)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the position of refugees voluntarily seeking repatriation from Hong Kong to Vietnam; if, in pursuing compulsory repatriation, he will take into account the views of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on whether the authorities in Hanoi are able to cope efficiently with returning refugees; and if he will make a statement on the use of force against refugees moved to a detention centre.

Mr. Maude: There is no question of refugees being repatriated to Vietnam against their will, although five refugees have returned at their own request. So far, 507 people have returned voluntarily to Vietnam under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and arrangements are being made with the Vietnamese authorities for the return of a further 1,000 volunteers as quickly as practicable. These are overwhelmingly people who have not yet been screened to determine whether they are refugees. Of those who have completed the screening procedure, and whose appeals have been heard, only 13 per cent. are found to be genuine refugees. The Hong Kong authorities have taken careful note of the comments made by the UNHCR representative in Hong Kong. We have full confidence in the manner in which the Hong Kong authorities have handled this matter.

El Salvador

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings have been held by Her Majesty's ambassador or his staff in El Salvador with representatives of trade unions or human rights groups during the last six months; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Salisbury: Her Majesty's ambassador to El Salvador and his staff maintain regular contact with Salvadorean and other human rights groups, as well as

with trade unions and representatives of all shades of opinion in El Salvador. These exchanges cover a wide range of subjects.

Indonesia

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money has been granted in loans to Indonesia by Her Majesty's Government during 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have made two concessional loan facilities worth a total of £240 million available to the Government of Indonesia. Loans worth around £55 million have so far been signed for five projects. Of these, two, worth around £19 million, were signed in 1988 and one, worth around £17 million, has been signed in 1989. Contracts have been signed recently for two further projects worth around £40 million, and it is expected that loan agreements for these will be concluded shortly.

South Africa

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list, by cost, all schemes in South Africa aided by the United Kingdom Government.

Mr. Sainsbury: We expect to spend some £3·9 million in 1989-90 on programmes of scholarships and training in the United Kingdom for South Africans. The United Kingdom share (expected to be some £3 million in 1989) of the European Community's programme of positive measures is attributed to the British aid programme. We also support the following schemes in South Africa: the costs given relate to forecast expenditure in the current financial year only:

	£'000
1. *Scholarships tenable in South Africa*	
British Award Scheme in South Africa	525
British Awards Scheme	150
2. *Projects*	
Alexandra Health Centre	250
Contribution to Urban Foundation loan guarantee fund	250
Science Education Project	100
Assistance to the University of Western Cape	90
Training Programmes for South African Trades Unions	75
Molteno Literacy Project	60
Primary Mathematics Project	40
Assistance to Early Learning Centres	40
Assistance to the READ Education Trust	35
English Language Training Seminars	30
Adult Education Project	30
Assistance to Get Ahead Foundation	25
Small business consultancy	5
Assistance to Business Skills Development Centre	5
Assistance to Programme for Technological Careers	10
3. *Other schemes*	
Small Projects approved by the Head of Mission	650
Gifts approved by the Head of Mission	100
Book Presentations	70
4. *Emergency aid*	
Operation Hunger	95

TRANSPORT

A19 (Safety)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when his Department intends to provide *(a)* lighting, *(b)* improved access roads, *(c)* improved drainage and *(d)* roadside emergency telephones on that section of the A19 which runs through the Easington constituency.

Mr. Atkins: A study of the length of the A19 trunk road in County Durham in 1988 recommended a number of improvements in priority order which could be made to the A19. All the matters to which the hon. Gentleman refers were taken into account by the study. The study findings are being up-dated in accordance with the new national road traffic forecasts and costs of road accidents. The report recommendations will be included in a future regional roads programme of improvements and maintenance works to be implemented by the Department's agent authorities having regard to other regional priorities and available funding.

Buses (Access)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what national statistical information he has on the proportion of buses in Britain which are fully accessible to *(a)* people with disabilities and *(b)* people who are wheelchair-bound.

Mr. Atkins: There is no national statistical information available on these points. But I am glad to say that a growing number of operators, manufacturers and local authorities are now adopting the recommended specification drawn up by the disabled persons transport advisory committee.

A new information video, "Welcome Aboad" is available from my Department on free loan to interested organisations.

More work needs to be done to develop efficient and effective wheelchair accessible buses. We are working with our European counterparts on this.

British Rail (Access)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what national statistical information he has relating to the proportion of British Rail passenger services which have toilets which are fully accessible to *(a)* people with disabilities and *(b)* people who are wheelchair-bound.

Mr. Atkins: Many ambulant disabled people are able to use the standard design of toilets available on long distance British Rail services.

All services on the InterCity network on the Euston to Glasgow Central service are already equipped with wheelchair accessible toilets. By October 1991 services on the King's Cross to Edinburgh service will also have this facility.

In the provincial sector about 200 trains representing many hundreds of journeys per day are already similarly equipped. By the beginning of 1992 the whole of that sector will have wheelchair accessible toilet facilities. Improvements are also in place on Network SouthEast.

Salvage

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport. (1) how many representations he has received, and from whom, in relation to the policy of competitive tendering for the salvage of Government-owned wrecks and cargoes;

(2) if he will list the Government-owned wrecks and cargoes which have been put out to competitive tender for salvage since his Department adopted such a policy; what were the dates on which tenders were solicited; and what are the numbers of such wrecks and cargoes upon which recovery work has commenced;

(3) what were the considerations which influenced his decision to suspend the award of salvage agreements; when he anticipates that he will lift that suspension; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what were the considerations which influenced the adoption of a policy of competitive tendering in the salvage of Government-owned wrecks and cargoes.

Mr. McLoughlin: The policy of competitive tendering for the salvage of Government-owned wrecks and cargoes has been introduced to obtain the best return to the taxpayer. One representation has been received in relation to this policy, from Deepwater Recovery and Exploration Ltd. So far one cargo, on the SS Gairsoppa, has been put out to tender. Tender invitations were issued on 29 September 1989 and the closing date for bids is 28 November 1989. Further invitations will be considered in the light of the results of the Gairsoppa tendering.

Automatic Railway Crossings

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many accidents there have been at automatic railway crossings during the last year; and how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* seriously injured.

Mr. Portillo: Provisional figures for 1988 show 26 accidents at automatic level crossings, in which there were five deaths and 13 injuries.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many automatic railway crossings malfunctions were caused by *(a)* equipment failure, *(b)* vandalism and *(c)* reasons unknown in the last 12 months;

(2) how many reports of faults or malfunctions there have been with automatic railway crossings during the last year *(a)* in Wales and *(b)* in Britain.

Mr. Portillo: The statistics requested for the last 12 months are not readily available. Provisional details for 1988 show that no faults or malfunctions with automatic level crossings were caused by equipment failure, vandalism or unknown reasons. There were five "systems failures", two of which were in Wales, caused by

(a) grease on rails (2)
(b) train passing signal at danger (2)
(c) train running into a barrier which had been damaged by a road vehicle.

A systems failure is defined as any occasion, not resulting in a train accident, when a train runs onto a protected crossing when not authorised to do so.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many automatic railway crossings there are in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Britain.

Mr. Portillo: At the end of October 1989, there were 53 automatic level crossings in Wales and 764 in Britain as a whole.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether trains are required to stop when the warning lights for motorists at automatic railway crossings fail; and what failsafe mechanisms are provided.

Mr. Portillo: Arrangements vary for the different types of automatic level crossing. Those for the two major types are as follows. At automatic open crossings locally-monitored, such as Raven crossing near Ammanford, failure of the road traffic signals would extinguish the intermittent white light on the railway approach to the crossing. If this light does not show, drivers are instructed to bring their trains to a stand short of the crossing and may thereafter proceed with caution over the road when it is safe to do so.

At crossings with automatic half-barriers, the barriers would descend automatically if the road traffic signals failed and an indication of the malfunction would be given to the signalman. He would set the railway signals at danger. After being warned of the problem, train drivers would be allowed to proceed with caution in the way described.

North Circular Road

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why the north circular road was closed at the Hanger lane interchange on Sunday 12 November; how long it had been closed; when it will be reopened; what is his estimate of the costs of repair; and what is his estimate of the costs of the delay to the travelling public affected by the closure.

Mr. Atkins: The north circular road was closed between Park avenue and Lytham grove in the London borough of Ealing from 1900 hours on Saturday 11 November until 0600 hours on Monday 13 November, to enable work to start on reconstruction of the London Underground, Piccadilly line bridge, at a cost of £2·099 million. The bridge reconstruction is part of the advance works for the improvement of the north circular road between Harrow road and Hanger lane.

This was the first of a series of weekend closures announced in a recent press notice. No closures will occur during December.

The closures have been arranged in consultation with the local authority and other bodies. No current estimate of the cost of the delays to the travelling public is available.

Bridges (Local Roads)

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the strengthening of bridge structures on local roads, and about the possible reclassification of local structural maintenance expenditure as capital.

Mr. Atkins: Hitherto, expenditure by local authorities in England on structural maintenance has been treated as current expenditure in the local government finance regime just like that on routine maintenance. Structural maintenance by central Government is, however, treated as capital, as is such maintenance by local authorities in Scotland. The appropriateness of this classification has

been reconsidered in the light of the recommendations of the Audit Commission, and of the implications of the need to have a national network of roads able to carry 40 tonne lorries from 1 January 1999. In accordance with what is proposed in the Local Government and Housing Bill 1989 it is proposed that structural maintenance should be treated as capital by local authorities, become subject to the capital finance regime, and eligible for transport supplementary grant.

The immediate transfer of all structural maintenance would involve a substantial readjustment of local authorities' financing and accounting practices and a major adjustment to the TSG system. It is therefore proposed that the transfer should be phased over a period of years. In 1991-92—the first practicable year—£90 million would be transferred. This would be sufficient in the Government's view to cover all structural maintenance and renewal expenditure on bridges necessary in 1991-92 as part of a programme to enable the 1999 EC deadline for heavier lorries to be met without bridge restriction on any key routes. It is envisaged that the programme should be continued with the transfer of a further £100 million in 1992-93; the Government consider this sufficient to restore major road carriageways to a satisfactory condition in order to meet the increased traffic flows and heavier lorries expected by the second half of the 1990s. There will be further transfers in later years.

The transfer would take the form of an addition to TSG, and an addition to credit approvals each covering half of the total transfer. The latter would feed through into standard spending assessment for the financing costs of capital expenditure. They would be balanced by a reduction in standard spending grant equivalent to the full amount of the transfer. The standard spending assessment total for road maintenance would similarly be reduced by the full amount of the transfer and the weighting for traffic in the assessment formula could be adjusted if necessary to reflect the change. The transfer is intended to be neutral in overall public expenditure terms; there is no reason why total local authority spending or community charges should be affected by this switch in accounting practices.

Next year's TPP circular will give local authorities guidance on the way in which the first tranche will be allocated and how to bid for the relevant TSG. The local authority associations will be consulted about this in the usual way. In the interim authorities will need to plan composite bridge strengthening programme in consultation, where appropriate, with the regional offices of DTp in order to be able to meet the EC deadline and to achieve a significant improvement in carriageway condition, first on major roads.

Local authorities are expected to respond to the change in classification by increasing capital expenditure, and reducing current expenditure, by the amount of the transfer. Authorities are expected to increase their effort on structural maintenance, and the amount transferred to capital will be greater than authorities are currently spending on this. Conversely, the overall reduction in current expenditure will need to be greater than the amount currently spent on structural maintenance; this can be achieved through efficiency savings in routine maintenance which have been recommended by the Audit Commission. Overall there should be no overall increase in local authority spending; the increase in capital expenditure should be offset by an equivalent reduction in current expenditure. The Government will take steps to monitor closely both capital and current expenditure on maintenance in the first year, and in subsequent years. Second and subsequent year transfers will be dependent on authorities responding in the desired way.

The Government believe that this change will help to ensure that the nation's road system is well maintained and is able to provide for heavier lorries from 1999.

King's Cross Underground Station

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will request London Underground Limited to inform him of the occasions since 1 October when it has had to close part or all of King's Cross underground station, indicating for each occasion the period it was closed inside normal working hours together with the reason; and if he will publish its reply in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Portillo: The following is the information:

Date	*Station closed on specified line*	*Duration of closure*	*Reason*
4 October 1989	Metropolitan	22 minutes	Insufficient staff to meet statutory requirements
6 October 1989	Northern, Victoria, Piccadilly lines	18 minutes	Congestion
9 October 1989	All lines	25 minutes	Congestion
20 October 1989	Northern	30 minutes	Safety check by LFCDA
25 October 1989	Piccadilly, Victoria	82 minutes	Bomb alert
26 October 1989	Metropolitan	37 minutes	Insufficient staff to meet statutory requirements
26 October 1989	Northern, Victoria	47 minutes	Insufficient staff to meet statutory requirements
27 October 1989	Northern, Metropolitan	15 minutes	Bomb alert
27 October 1989	Piccadilly	5 minutes	Safety check by LFCDA
28 October 1989	All lines	79 minutes	Safety check by LFCDA
1 November 1989	Victoria	15 minutes	Congestion
3 November 1989	Metropolitan	20 minutes	Congestion
4 November 1989	Metropolitan	118 minutes	Insufficient staff to meet statutory requirements
12 November 1989	Metropolitan	45 minutes	Insufficient staff to meet statutory requirements

Animal Feedstuffs

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ban the carrying of mixed cargoes in ships transporting animal feedstuffs.

Mr. McLoughlin: The codes drawn up by the International Maritime Organisation to regulate the carriage of dangerous goods by sea either in bulk or package form require a proper segregation to be maintained between the stowage of toxic substances and foodstuff. This safeguard should be sufficient but if upon investigation it is found that there is a need to strengthen it this will be pursued.

Disabled Persons

Mr. Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the disabled persons transport advisory committee will publish the report of its consultation and hearing held earlier this year.

Mr. Parkinson: The report on education and training in the transport industry is published today.

This report focuses on a part of the potential market for public transport which has all too often been neglected in the past. Recent Government surveys indicate that there are over 6 million adults in this country who have a disability of some kind. That in itself is potentially an enormous additional market if our vehicles and systems are designed or adapted to their needs. Added to that, there is a large number of people who are not "disabled" in a medical sense but who have a "mobility handicap" which makes it difficult or impossible for them to use traditional forms of transport. People with heavy luggage, with shopping, with prams and with pushchairs, as well as those who are frail and elderly come into this category.

The report highlights this hitherto neglected market section and makes a number of direct practical recommendations to ensure that in future our transport systems are better attuned to the needs of people who have mobility handicaps. Those recommendations which involve action by my Department will be looked at immediately. I warmly endorse the Committee's work and its findings and I urge local authorities, transport operators, and professional transport institutions, to whom many of the other recommendations in the report are addressed, to note it and act upon it speedily.

Vehicle Inspectorate

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the vehicle inspectorate executive agency annual report will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The vehicle inspectorate's annual report and accounts, published today, provide a valuable overall picture of the general condition of Britain's road vehicles. Copies have been placed in the House Libraries.

The condition of the heavy goods vehicle fleet appears to have improved during the past year. The annual test failure rate for motor vehicles has decreased from 33 per cent. to 31·5 per cent. and there was also a marginal decrease in the failure rate for trailers, from 26·8 per cent. to 26·5 per cent. However, there was an increase in the frequency of some brake-related faults on trailers which is probably due to the changes to the braking requirements and tighter test brake performance standard introduced in the early 1980s.

On environmental standards, there is encouraging news. Surveys carried out during the year show that the number of vehicles with diesel engines seen emitting excessive smoke continues to decline. The failure rate at annual test for excessive smoke remains unchanged at just over 1 per cent.

The trends in the condition of the PSV fleet are also encouraging. Special roadside surveys and the PSV testing scheme indicate that PSVs are being operated and presented for test with fewer faults and that the improvement in annual test pass rates seen last year has been maintained. However it is less encouraging that the number of immediate prohibitions issued at spot checks has shown a slow but steady rise over the last few years. The trend will be carefully monitored and the inspectorate will continue to work closely with the Bus and Coach Council which has been very supportive during the year, particularly with regard to a variety of road safety based training courses which have been held.

Although the overall condition of cars and light goods vehicles has marginally improved, the annual test fail rate is still 41 per cent. It is encouraging that there has been a reduction in the number of failures due to poor brakes and tyres, both safety critical areas, but this contrasts with a rise in the number of vehicles with lighting defects.

The condition of the motorcycle fleet appears to be deteriorating. The overall fail rate is the same as the last two years (30 per cent.) but there has been a continuous rise over the past four years in the total number of defects. The largest increases in 1988 were in the two critical areas of brakes and steering.

Annual and spot checks of vehicle roadworthiness are important ways in which risk on the roads is contained. Whilst the results in the report show some improvements and encouraging trends, the failure rates continue to be too high and serve to remind owners and operators of the need to ensure that their vehicles are properly and regularly maintained.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Sunday Observance Act 1780

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to repeal the Sunday Observance Act 1780.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. We believe that the policy of successive Governments to leave the initiative with private Members should be maintained.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to make any provision to ensure that the Sunday Observance Act 1780 is enforced on 31 December 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will issue guidelines to local authorities on the enforcement of the Sunday Observance Act 1780 in time for consideration of the issue of relevant licences for Sunday 31 December 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: It is for local authorities to determine whether or not to grant entertainment licences taking into account the provisions of the Sunday Observance Act 1780.

Magistrates Clerks (Media)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidelines he has given magistrates' clerks about supplying lists giving details of defendants and charges to the media; what he has suggested the list should contain; what steps he is taking to ensure that it is not prejudicial to defendants for charges to be publicised prior to any trial and that such publicity does not stigmatise an innocent person; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Guidance is contained in Home Office circular 80/1989, a copy of which I am placing in the Library. It does not affect the rights of defendants.

Shotguns

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he intends to take action regarding the open sale of shotguns disguised as walking sticks and umbrellas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. The purchase of all kinds of shotguns is controlled under the provisions of the Firearms Acts 1968 and 1988. Such guns may be purchased only by persons who have been granted a shot-gun certificate by a chief officer of police, and all applications for such certificates are carefully scrutinised. A chief officer of police can refuse to grant or renew a shotgun certificate if he is satisfied that an applicant does not have a good reason for possessing, purchasing or acquiring a shotgun. The carrying of a loaded shotgun in a public place without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence.

Under section 18 of the Firearms (Amendment) Act 1988 a visitor to Great Britain may purchase a shotgun for export only, but is not permitted to take possession of it in this country.

Tarek A. Shirief

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received recent representations from Tarek A. Shirief's lawyers about the return of his passport; and if he will make a statement about the inquiry into alleged misconduct by West Sussex police regarding this case.

Mr. Waddington: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 20 July at column *303*. We have no record of having received any further representations from Mr. Shirief's solicitors since then.

Mr. Shirief's complaint against the West Sussex police is being dealt with under the terms of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. The investigation of such complaints is the responsibility of the chief officer of the force concerned and Ministers have no authority to intervene. I understand that the investigation cannot proceed at present because Mr. Shirief's whereabouts are unknown.

Forensic Units

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his answers to the hon. Member for Linlithgow of 2 November, *Official Report*, column *265*, and the hon. Member for Huddersfield (Mr. Sheerman) of 27 October, *Official Report*, column *637*, if he has assessed the costs and benefits of the use of public funds to establish independent forensic units in universities, along the lines of Professor Brian Caddy's unit in Strathclyde.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: No. We are not convinced of the need for such a study.

Sri Lankans

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what are the reasons why the whereabouts of the Sri Lankans who stripped at Heathrow, and whether any of them have left the United Kingdom, are not known.

(2) when he anticipates that the remaining cases of the Sri Lankans who stripped at Heathrow will be resolved.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The cases will be resolved as soon as pressure of work in the refugee unit allows. We cannot guarantee that changes of address will have been notified to us promptly, but, unless there was some deception, embarkation from the United Kingdom would routinely be recorded.

Visitors (Overstaying)

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what record is kept of the departure of visitors from the Indian sub-continent; how this is used to establish who is overstaying; and if he can quantify the level of overstaying in the clearest and most expressive way.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Deportation

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects that the issue of the deportation of IMP A355695/55 Adeshola Adunni Adeloma will be resolved.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been paid to victims of crime by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in *(a)* 1989 to date, *(b)* 1988, *(c)* 1987, *(d)* 1986, *(e)* 1985 and *(f)* 1984.

Mr. John Patten: Between 1 April and 30 September the board paid £27·6 million in compensation to victims. The payments in earlier years ended 31 March were as follows:

Year	*Compensation £ million*
1984-85	35·3
1985-86	41·6
1986-87	48·2
1987-88	52·0
1988-89	69·4

Dowry Disputes

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to investigate the incidence of violence associated with dowry disputes; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: If the hon. Member will write to me about what he has in mind I will consider his suggestion.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will give details of the information which is supplied to employers on the terms and provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Mr. Waddington: The main source of information produced by my Department is the leaflet "Wiping the Slate Clean". Although the leaflet is intended primarily for people who have been convicted, it sets out the effects of the Act and indicates that an employer cannot dismiss or refuse to employ a person because he or she has a spent conviction.

Copies of the leaflet have been made available for example through all citizens' advice bureaux and are available free of charge from Room 339, Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's gate, London, SW1H 9AT.

Burglaries

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many burglaries involving private dwellings took place in *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* inner cities and *(c)* inner London in the last three years for which statistics are available.

Mr. John Patten: The readily available information relates to police force areas in England and Wales and is published annually in table S3.1, "Criminal Statistics Supplementary Tables 1988, Volume 3", quarterly in table 4 of Home Office statistical bulletins (the latest issue is 29/89) and separate tables for each police force area and quarterly in separate tables for London boroughs (showing total burglary); copies of all these are in the Library.

Attacks on Women

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women were attacked by intruders in their homes, not including incidents of domestic violence, in each of the last three years for which figures are available in *(a)* Great Britain, *(b)* inner cities and *(c)* inner London.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is not available.

Holmes System

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Holmes system, as operated by police forces in England; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Holmes system as operated by Hampshire constabulary.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The effectiveness of the Holmes system in meeting the requirements set out by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) for computer assistance in the investigation of major crime is kept under review by the Home Office in collaboration with ACPO. The present system appears to be meeting these needs satisfactorily, although work is in hand to make improvements to the system in due course.

The effectiveness of the Holmes system in use in individual police forces is a matter for chief officers.

National Information Network

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy with regard to the establishment of a national information network for the police.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Our aim is to implement a national information network for the police as soon as practicable. A study has already been undertaken to determine the potential traffic between forces and between forces and other parts of the criminal justice system. The next stage is to undertake a number of pilot projects to ascertain the technical requirements for the interchange of electronic data and to establish standards.

Pet Animals (Protection)

Mr. Colin Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Her Majesty's Government will ratify the Council of Europe convention for the protection of pet animals.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to questions from the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) on 1 December 1988 at column *401*.

Child Abuse

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will mount a publicity campaign aimed specifically at children which instructs them how to keep themselves safe from child abuse.

Mr. John Patten: We believe that advice on this subject is best communicated to children through their parents or other responsible adults. It is for this reason that the Home Office crime prevention handbook reproduces advice for parents to give to their children prepared by the Kidscape organisation.

Immigration

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will indicate, for each of the past three years, and for the current year to date, how many people have been given indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom on compassionate grounds.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The cases referred to cannot be identified separately in the figures for acceptances for settlement. As analysis of acceptances in the years 1986-88 and the first two quarters of 1989, by category, is published in table 3 of Home Office statistical bulletin issue 31/ 89 "Control of Immigration: Statistics—Second Quarter 1989", a copy of which is in the Library. Corresponding information for the third quarter of 1989 will be published next month.

Drugs

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inmates in gaols in England and Wales were offered prescribed methadone maintenance or withdrawal programmes for drug addiction in *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* so far in 1989.

Mr. Mellor: The number of drug addicts received into prison custody who are offered methadone as part of their treatment is not recorded centrally.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what medical treatment is available for prisoners with drug addiction problems in prisons in England and Wales.

Mr. Mellor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply to a question by the hon. Member for St. Helens, South (Mr. Bermingham) on 27 July 1989 at column 794.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which community-based drug agencies have access to prison establishments in England and Wales; and whether the prison department meets their expenses.

Mr. Mellor: In developing throughcare arrangements, prison establishments increasingly take account of the potential contribution available from suitable community-based drug agencies. Details of those used are not collected centrally. Governors may meet reasonable expenses incurred by participating members of voluntary organisations.

Prisons

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total prison population in *(a)* England, and *(b)* Wales, in each of the years since 1980.

Mr. Mellor *[holding answer 6 November 1989]:* The readily available information is given in the table.

Population in custody in England and Wales on 30 June, 1980-89

30 June Year	Prison Service establishments		Police cells	All persons in custody
	England	Wales[1]		
1980	42,908	1,028	—	43,936
1981	43,398	1,063	—	44,461
1982	42,915	1,085	54	44,054
1983	42,339	987	300	43,626
1984	43,537	896	22	44,455
1985	46,518	985	96	47,599
1986	45,716	919	181	46,816
1987	49,202	1,063	581	50,846
1988	48,568	1,010	724	50,302
1989	47,652	880	226	48,758

[1] Cardiff, Swansea and Usk (Prescoed)

Prison Sentences

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many of the total number of persons sentenced to a period of imprisonment in England and Wales during 1988 were put into custody by the Crown court; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many of the total number of persons sentenced to a period of imprisonment in England and Wales during 1988 were put into custody by the magistrates court; and if he will make a statement;

(3) how many persons were committed for sentencing to the Crown court by a magistrates court in England and Wales during 1988; how many of those persons received a custodial sentence; and if he will make a statement;

(4) if he will list the number of persons given a custodial sentence in England and Wales during 1988 following convictions for theft, burglary, dishonestly handling, deception and fraud when the value of the goods stolen or damaged was *(a)* less than £2,000, *(b)* less than £1,000, *(c)* less than £500, *(d)* less than £200, and *(e)* less than £100; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what proportion of all persons sentenced to a period of custody in England and Wales during 1988 received a sentence of *(a)* 12 months or less, and *(b)* six months or less; and if he will make a statement;

(6) what was the total number of persons sentenced to a period of imprisonment in England and Wales during 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* Information held centrally for 1988 is given in the tables which relate to the principal offence for which the offender was sentenced. Court proceedings data does not distinguish the value of goods stolen or damaged for offences committed.

Table A
Persons sentenced to immediate custody[1] by court
England and Wales 1988

Court	Total sentenced	Immediate custody	
		Number	per cent.
Magistrates'	1,456,925	23,729	2
Crown	98,435	48,336	49
All courts	1,555,360	72,065	5

[1] Includes both summary and indictable offences.

Table B
Persons committed for sentencing to the Crown Court 1988 and defendants sentenced to immediate custody at the Crown Court after summary conviction 1988
England and Wales

Court	Committed for sentence to Crown Court	Crown Court		
		Total for sentence	Immediate custody	
			Number	per cent.
Magistrates'	7,362	[1]	[1]	[1]
Crown	[1]	7,382	4,113	56

[1] Not applicable.

Table C
Persons sentenced to immediate custody for specific offences
England and Wales 1988

Offence	Total sentenced	Immediate custody Number	per cent.
Burglary	48,491	16,738	35
Theft	140,112	14,774	11
Dishonest handling	23,508	3,078	13
Fraud[1]	20,041	2,920	15

[1] Including by deception.

Table D
Persons sentenced to immediate custody by sentence length and by court
England and Wales

Court	Total sentenced to immediate custody	Length of sentence: 6 months and under Number	per cent.	Over 6 months and up to 1 year Number	per cent.	Over 1 year Number	per cent.
Magistrates'	23,729	23,729	100	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]
Crown	48,336	15,451	32	13,913	29	18,971	39
All courts	72,065	39,180	54	13,913	19	18,971	26

[1] Not applicable.

Immigration and Nationality Office (Birmingham)

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Birmingham immigration and nationality office will open for public business.

Mr. Peter Lloyd *[holding answer 26 October 1989]:* Not before the next financial year when the opening of the proposed Birmingham public inquiry office will have to be considered with other demands on the available financial resources.

PRIME MINISTER

Kincora Boys' Home

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what recent representations have been received by her Cabinet secretariat relating to events at the Kincora boys' home in Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister: I am advised that there have been no such representations from Members of Parliament and members of the public.

Security

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister what is Her Majesty's Government's latest assessment of the threat from the Soviet Union to the security of the United Kingdom.

The Prime Minister: The Soviet Union, together with the other members of the Warsaw pact currently possesses a large superiority in conventional ground and air forces in Europe, as well as very powerful naval and nuclear forces, and will continue to do so even after the recently promised unilateral cuts have been implemented.

As long as the Warsaw pact retains military forces on this scale, the capability that they provide for aggression, if intentions should change, cannot be ignored. NATO's aim is to remove the imbalance of forces in Europe by negotiated reductions, to create a lasting, stable peace, in which all states can enjoy security with freedom with the minimum necessary forces.

German Reunification

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government towards reunification of Germany in the event of all foreign troop withdrawals from German soil; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member on 7 June at column *161*.

Employment (Ministers and Officials)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will introduce legislation to prevent Ministers and officials, including officials of the Bank of England, from taking up employment with any firm or organisation working in a sector with which they have been directly or indirectly associated in the previous five years.

The Prime Minister: The Government have no plans to do so.

Environment

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Prime Minister (1) if she will publish or authorise the publication of all papers presented to, and the transcript of all evidence presented by, scientists and other experts at the meeting on the environment held at 10 Downing street on 26 April;

(2) if she will list all the scientists and other experts who took part in the meeting on the environment at 10 Downing street on 26 April.

The Prime Minister: No.

Haemophiliacs (HIV)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will consider waiving legal aid requirements to enable all HIV-positive haemophiliacs to instigate immediately court cases against regional health authorities; and whether she will consider granting a further ex-gratia payment prior to the courts receiving a settlement in these cases.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I have been asked to reply.

No. The Lord Chancellor's Department has responsibility for such matters. It advises that legal aid will continue to be available subject to the usual criteria.

In respect of a further ex-gratia payment, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South West (Mr. Butcher) on 6 November at columns *450-51*.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Disabled Students

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will increase the disabled student equipment award.

Mr. Jackson: The disabled student allowance maximum within the mandatory award—which is not confined to equipment—has been substantially increased in recent years, and stands at £765 for 1989-90. My right hon. Friend will consider its level when he comes to review mandatory award rates for 1990-91 in the light of student needs and available resources.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met representatives of the Students with Disabilities Bureau; and what was discussed.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has not met representatives of the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL). Officials in my Department, however, hold frequent meetings with representatives of the bureau.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether his Department will undertake a survey to discover how much is spent by visually impaired further education and higher education students on *(a)* equipment, *(b)* training on usage of equipment, *(c)* cost of human assistance and *(d)* production and storage costs of materials in Braille, large print and tape.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend has no present plans to do so, but will keep the matter under review.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the total amount spent on the disabled students' allowance.

Mr. Jackson: In 1987-88 local education authorities in England and Wales assessed disabled students allowances totalling some £158,000 within mandatory student awards.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of disabled students receive the disabled students' allowance.

Mr. Jackson: All disabled students in receipt of mandatory awards who by reason of disability incur additional expenditure in attending their courses are eligible for this allowance. Information is not collected centrally on disabled students not in receipt of mandatory awards.

ILEA

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he last met the leader of the Inner London education authority; what issues were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend met the leader of the Inner London education authority in his capacity as chairman of the education committee of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities at a meeting of members and officers of local authorities on 26 October to discuss local authority spending on education in 1990-91. I met the leader of the authority on 27 September to discuss teacher shortages and early years provision in inner London.

Schools (Government Policy)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many letters he has received in the last three months, to date, from head teachers *(a)* in Bradford and *(b)* in the United Kingdom expressing concern at the impact of Government policy in their schools; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The information is not available in the form requested. My right hon. Friend frequently receives correspondence from head teachers about various aspects of education provision.

Education Resources (Bradford)

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received asking him to make inquiries into whether resources made available by him to Bradford for education purposes have been transferred into infrastructure schemes related to the west end development; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Howarth: None. It is for local authorities to decide how to use the level of resources available to them, in the light of local needs and circumstances. They are free to use the virement arrangements between authority services.

Grant-maintained Schools, Easington

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which boards of school governors have expressed a wish to opt for grant-maintained status within the Easington constituency.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department is not aware of any school governing body in the Easington constituency area which has expressed a wish to opt for grant-maintained status.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about his Department's plans for expenditure on education and science over the next three years.

Mr. John MacGregor: As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in his statement today, within the redefined public expenditure planning total the provision for the Department of Education and Science's programme in 1990-91 will be £6,589 million. This total is £876 million or 15·3 per cent. higher than the corresponding provision for 1989-90.

My Department's spending plans include: an increase of over £750 million over the next three years in resources available for higher education—excluding provision for student maintenance awards and the new top-up loans scheme—enabling a substantial increase in student numbers to be funded;

the addition of over £175 million over the next three years to the science budget, which will reach £897 million in 1990-91—an increase of 27 per cent. over the figure for 1988-89; and annual capital guidelines for local authority capital expenditure in 1990-91 of £485 million; capital allocations for schools and colleges for 1989-90 totalled £352 million.

Higher Education

The Government's plans allow for a significant increase in participation in higher education. The number of full-time and sandwich course students is now expected to increase by over 50,000 or just under 10 per cent., between 1988-89 and 1992-93, reflecting mainly the welcome increase in the numbers staying on in school after 16. Despite the declining trend in the number of 18-year-olds, the number of students in higher education is expected to rise throughout the next three years. This means that about one in five 18-year-olds will be entering higher education in 1992-93, compared with one in eight at the end of 1970s. The table sets out the projections of student numbers on which the new expenditure plans are based.

To fund this expansion, the resources available for higher education will increase by over £750 million over the next three years, compared with previous plans. That addition will include:

(a) increased provision for recurrent and capital expenditure. Compared with previous plans, the Government are providing some £330 million more over three years for recurrent and capital funding for higher education;

(b) savings on rates expenditure: higher education institutions will benefit by over £230 million over the next three years from the change in the law on rates payments by charities;

(c) provision for fees, at the full rate of £1,675 from the academic year 1990-91, for the higher number of full-time students now projected. The increase in fees provision for these extra students is some £190 million over three years.

Taking these components together, there will be an increase in available recurrent funds for higher education of 10 per cent. between 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Within the total of funds available, the balance between recurrent funding through the funding councils and payments made through tuition fees has been shifted, in accordance with the policy announced on 6 July. That adjustment relates only to previously planned student numbers and is financially neutral; it simply switches resources from recurrent funding to fees.

Universities

The plans allow for an increase, excluding the fees for extra students, of over £135 million in recurrent and capital funding for the universities over the three years from 1990-91 to 1992-93. In addition, the universities will benefit from a saving on their rates bill estimated to total over £200 million for these three years and from extra income from tuition fees of £1,675 for every additional student enrolled beyond the Government's earlier plans.

After taking account of the shift of resources from recurrent funding to higher tuition fees in respect of students allowed for in the Government's earlier plans, the total available in 1990-91 to the Universities Funding Council for recurrent funding will be £1,685 million. As envisaged in earlier plans, this includes £52 million which will be earmarked for the restructuring programme. The plans also allow for other committed items such as the continuation of the extra funds made available this year for the 1989 clinical academic pay settlement.

The plans should ensure the financial viability of the universities as student numbers increase, and should enable them to make significant progress in dealing with maintenance costs and to reach satisfactory pay settlements with their staffs. The Government intend, however, to hold back £20 million of the provision being made available to the Universities Funding Council in 1990-91 for release only in the event of a satisfactory pay settlement for academic staff which incorporates greater flexibility and differentiation.

Capital funding for the universities has been increased by some £30 million over three years, mainly to allow for new equipment. In addition, the plans allow for an increase in grant to the Open university of £7 million in 1990-91 for capital and recurrent purposes.

Polytechnics and Colleges

The plans allow an increase, excluding the fees for extra students, of £195 million in recurrent and capital funding for the polytechnics and colleges over three years. Polytechnics and colleges will also benefit from a saving on their rates bill over three years of some £35 million and from tuition fee income at the level of £1,675 per student for every additional student enrolled beyond the Government's earlier plans.

After taking account of the shift of resources to higher tuition fees in respect of students allowed for in the Government's earlier plans, recurrent funding available to the PCFC in 1990-91 will be £1,014 million. As envisaged in last year's plans, £7 million of this will be earmarked for further restructuring in 1990-91 and £22 million will be available for contingencies, including maintenance and repairs for buildings. The plans also allow for other commitments including the cost of the additional institutions and courses to be transferred to the PCFC sector from April 1990.

The plans should enable polytechnics and colleges to maintain financial viability as student numbers increase, and also to reach satisfactory pay settlements with their staffs. The Government intend, however, to hold back £12 million from the provision for the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council to be released only in the event of satisfactory pay settlements for academic staff which incorporates measures designed to achieve further improvements in efficiency.

Capital funding for polytechnics and colleges has been increased by £60 million over three years mainly to meet priority building improvement needs.

In both sectors, the money available allows for costs associated with the move of the funding councils to Bristol. It also takes into account developments in teacher training, in particular the need to enhance school experience for relevant academic staff.

Student Support

Planned expenditure on student support takes account of the increased numbers of students projected in the table and of the higher fee level of £1,675 from the academic year 1990-91. After allowing for the switch of funds to fees, total provision for student maintenance and the cost of fees in 1990-91 is £1,210 million. The details of the new rates of award and revised contribution scales will be announced in due course.

The Government's spending plans also include £109 million in 1990-91, £179 million in 1991-92 and £204 million in 1992-93 for the introduction of the top-up loans scheme from September 1990, subject to the passage of the necessary legislation. Provision for the administration costs of the loans scheme will be added when final figures are available. The loan rates will be as set out in the White Paper "Top-up Loans for Students" (Cm. 520).

The plans include, in addition, provision for the access funds for students in further and higher education, including postgraduate students: £5·6 million and £3·5 million will be made available to the Universities Funding Council and Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council respectively to distribute to institutions within their sectors; £4·1 million will be made available to colleges of further education, and to institutions receiving grant from the Department.

Science

The science budget will increase by £178 million over the next three years, compared with previous plans. This reflects the importance which the Government continue to attach to funding basic and strategic science and follows the substantial additional sums made available last year.

The cash limit for the science budget will be £897 milion in 1990-91, with provision of £912 million in 1991-92 and £935 million in 1992-93—increases over previous plans of £61 million and £58 million and £59 million respectively. At £897 million the science budget in 1990-91 is £189 million higher than expenditure in 1988-89—an increase of 27 per cent. over two years.

I am inviting the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (the ABRC) to provide me with its advice on the distribution of the resources which the Government are making available, and how they can best be spent to further the Government's aims for civil science in the interests of the nation as a whole.

Within the totals available I am providing an additional £8·7 million in 1990-91 to sustain scientific research programmes while meeting the construction costs of the Antarctic research and logistics vessel RRS James Clark Ross, and a further £8·5 million to meet the slippage in expenditure on that ship between 1989-90 and 1990-91. The James Clark Ross, which is due to be launched in December 1990, will play a key role in support of environmental research programmes in the Antarctic.

The Government also intend to put the British Geological Survey on a sound long-term footing through a once-for-all investment in the national geological information service. I am providing a total of £6 million over the three years 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93 to stimulate the generation of outside income which can be reinvested in core surveying activity.

We have also undertaken to provide a minimum allocation of £2 million in each year for a remote sensing instrument associated with the proposed earth remote sensing satellite (ERS-2) which is planned to be launched in 1993 by the European Space Agency. I shall be seeking the ABRC's advice on what further allocation is appropriate for earth observation instruments, particularly on polar platforms.

City Technology Colleges and grant-maintained schools

The Department's plans allow for the addition of £28 million over the next three years to secure progress towards the target of 20 city technology colleges. Our plans also allow for expenditure on grant-maintained schools. The great bulk of this is funded by transfer from local authority current expenditure, but the Department pays grant for transitional, capital and some other costs.

Local Authority and Voluntary Aided School Capital Expenditure

In 1990-91 annual capital guidelines for local authority capital expenditure on schools and colleges in England will total £485 million; the capital allocations total was £352 million for schools and colleges in 1989-90. Building grants to voluntary aided and grant-maintained schools will total £118 million, an increase of £30 million over the corresponding vote provision in 1989-90. This extra provision will allow continued progress on improvement programmes in the schools, including building work associated with the introduction of the national curriculum, together with additional investment in further education colleges. Local authorities will also be able to finance capital expenditure from capital receipts and other sources: the actual level of total expenditure is for local authorities to determine in the light of local policies and their assessed requirements.

Further and Higher Education

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has on the level and type of provision of facilities for visually impaired students at each higher education and further education college in Wales.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend's responsibilities extend only to the university of Wales, for which no information on this is held centrally by the Department.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of the gross national product was spent on higher education for each year for which figures are available since 1979; and what information he has on the corresponding figures for Australia, Canada, France, West Germany, Japan and the United States of America.

Mr. Jackson: The available information is shown in the table. Corresponding data for earlier years are not readily available.

Public recurrent expenditure[1] on higher education 1986

	As Percentage of GNP
Australia	1·6
Canada	2·0
France	0·7
West Germany	0·9
Japan	0·5
United Kingdom[2]	0·9
USA[3]	0·8/0·9

Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook.

[1] The data includes apportionment of expenditure described as unallocated which can be significant.

[2] Excludes expenditure on nursing and paramedical students on courses at Department of Health establishments, and the salaries of in-service teacher training secondments.

[3] Lower figure based on exclusion of 2-year courses from higher education.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proportion of young people between *(a)* the ages of 16 and 18 and *(b)* the ages of 19 and 22 years, were in full-time education in the latest year

for which figures are available; and what information he has on the corresponding figures for Australia, Canada, France, West Germany, Japan and the United States of America.

Mr. Jackson: The following information is readily available. Figures for combined full-time and part-time participation, and for higher education participation at all ages on the OECD definition, are also given to provide a fuller picture. Further comparisons of 16 to 18-year-olds will appear in a statistics bulletin, which will be published shortly. Figures for 19 to 22-year-olds in other countries tend to be inflated by longer duration of courses and higher drop-out rates. For example, university courses in the United Kingdom typically last three years compared with four or more years elsewhere.

Proportion in education, academic year 1985-86

Per cent.

Country	*Ages 16-18 education and training*[1]		*Ages 19-22 education*	
	full-time	*full-time and part-time*	*full-time*	*full-time and part-time*
Australia	50	66	[2]	[2]
Canada[3]	75	75	27	29
France	66	74	24	[4]24
West Germany	[5]47	[5]90	19	36
Japan	77	79	[6]	[6]
United Kingdom[7]	33	69	[6]8	[6]23
	(35)	(73)	(8)	(23)
USA[9]	79	80	30	34

[1] Including apprenticeships, YTS and similar schemes.
[2] Not available.
[3] Excluding part-time students at Community Colleges, for whom age detail is not available.
[4] Part-time participation is negligible.
[5] Academic year 1986-87. Includes compulsory part-time education for 16 and 17-year-olds.
[6] Age detail for students aged over 18 is not readily available.
[7] Figures in brackets are for academic year 1987-88. Including nursing and paramedical students at DH establishments, and for 16-18s, estimates for public sector evening study and for private sector further and higher education, including training courses with employers. Includes adult education at LEA establishments.
[8] Based on ages 19-24.
[9] Including private sector higher education.

Participation in higher education 1985[1]

	New entrant rate[2]
Australia	39
Canada	. .
France	32
West Germany	[3]29
Japan[4,5]	36/49
United Kingdom	34
USA[4,6,7]	30/61

[1] Australia 1984, Germany and United Kingdom 1987, USA and Japan 1986.
[2] OECD define new entrants to higher education as excluding postgraduates and those already qualified in higher education irrespective of age. The denominator is the age-group of the population including 70 per cent. of new entrants, divided by the number of years involved.
[3] Partly estimated.
[4] Including a significant private sector element.
[5] Figures presented as range. The higher figure adds students in advanced senshus, some of whom may be equivalent to level 5, to the official rate.
[6] The lower figure is the result of removing students on two year courses (some of which may be below higher education level) from the official rate.
[7] First year students.

Sources:
OECD Education in OECD countries—comparative statistics 1985-86.
Correspondence with individual countries.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Televising of Proceedings

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will ensure that live television pictures of parliamentary proceedings will be made available on equal terms as to cost to all cable television franchises in the United Kingdom.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The report of the Select Committee on Televising of Proceedings of the House, which the House has approved as the basis for the televising experiment, provides for all broadcasting organisations to have access to the signal, subject to the approval of the Committee in the case of those other than the BBC, ITN and other contractors within the jurisdiction of the IBA. The report states that the Committee's approval should be withheld "only in exceptional circumstances". The cost at which the signal is supplied to cable operators is a matter in the first instance for negotiation between them and House of Commons Broadcasting Unit Ltd. The Select Committee emphasised in its report, however, that it expected the cost of the experiment

"to be shared equally amongst the broadcasting organisations".

The report also made it clear that, in the event of a complaint of alleged discrimination against one particular customer, or category of customers, in the price charged for the signal, the Committee would consider appointing an arbitrator who would have full access to information about the unit's costs. I should stress that the Committee sees this possibility very much as a final resort, to be invoked only in those rare cases where agreement cannot

be reached between House of Commons Broadcasting Unit Ltd and an individual customer or group of customers for the signal.

The Select Committee will, of course, exercise a general oversight over the arrangements for supplying and distributing the signal as part of its responsibility for monitoring the progress of the experiment, with a view to reporting to the House on its outcome in due course.

EMPLOYMENT

Disablement Assistance

Mr. Litherland: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will announce the date of the publication of the Government's internal review of employment assistance to disabled adults.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) on 13 November 1989 at column *58*.

Earnings

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the average, median, quartile and decile full-time adult male manual and non-manual workers the percentage increase in real earnings, including overtime, between April 1979 and April 1989 together with the increase in the real value of sterling against the deutschmark, the dollar and the yen between the fourth quarter of 1976 and the first quarter of 1979 and between that quarter and the second quarter of 1988.

Mr. Nicholls: The increases in real earnings are provided in the table:

Full-time adult males in Great Britain

Percentage increase

	Manuals	*Non-manuals*	*All*
Lowest decile	4	17	10
Lower quartile	8	26	14
Median	11	33	21
Higher quartile	14	37	29
Highest decile	17	46	38
Average earnings	13	38	28

Notes:

The increases shown do not relate to the same individuals at the different dates.

Source: New Earnings Survey data deflated by the RPI (all items).

There is no single definition of real exchange rates and bilateral real exchange rates are not published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) nor by OECD. Data on bilateral nominal exchange rates and various price indices for the relevant countries are published by the IMF in "International Financial Statistics".

Skills Training Agency

Miss Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his reply of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *172*, with reference to the Skills Training Agency, if he will place in the Library a copy of the information memorandum about the Skills Training Agency.

Mr. Nicholls: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) on 31 October, *Official Report* column *172*. The information memorandum has been issued to potential bidders who have signed a confidentiality undertaking.

STA staff and unions have been sent an STA bulletin about the memorandum. A copy of the bulletin will be placed in the Library.

Agriculture Inspectors

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number and location of agricultural inspectors with responsibility for Wales in each year since 1975.

Mr. Nicholls: The number and location of agricultural inspectors in post in HSE's area and local offices in Wales is as follows:

	Cardiff	*Wrexham*	*Carmarthen*	*Total*
1 April 1977[1]	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	17
1978	—	—	—	17
1979	—	—	—	19
1980	—	—	—	19
1981	—	—	—	16
1982	—	—	—	15
1983	—	—	—	13
1984	—	—	—	13
1985	3	6	5	14
1986	3	6	5	14
1987	5	5	4	14
1988	4	5	3	12
1989	5	4	3	12
1 November 1989	6	4	3	13

[1] Agricultural inspectors joined HSE from MAFF from March 1976; the full field force was in place in March 1977.

[2] Information about the location of inspectors in Wales is not available for 1977-1984.

The figures do not include inspectors in the inspectorate's HQ, or elsewhere in HSE, engaged on line management work or contributing to policy or technical work.

Factory Inspectors

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number and location of factory inspectors with responsibility for Wales in each year since 1975.

Mr. Nicholls: The number and location of factory inspectors in post in HSE's area and local offices in Wales is as follows:

	Cardiff	*Wrexham*	*Swansea*	*Total*
1 April 1977[1]	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	31
1978	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	31
1979	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	32
1980	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	33
1981	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	31
1982	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	29
1983	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	23
1984	[2]—	[2]—	[2]—	23
1985	15	5	3	23
1986	15	5	3	23
1987	16	5	3	24
1988	17·5	6	[2]—	23·5
1989	18	5	[2]—	23
1 November 1989	22	6	[2]—	28

[1] Separate figures for Wales are not available until 1977.
[2] Information about the location of inspectors in Wales is not available for 1977-84.
[3] The HSE office at Swansea was closed in July 1987.

The figures do not include inspectors in the inspectorate's HQ, or elsewhere in HSE, engaged on line management work or contributing to policy or technical work.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* There has been no discontinuation of any of the statistics collected or published by the Department of Employment since 1986 other than where changes have occurred in the administrative systems from which some statistics are derived. The few minor discontinuations between 1979 and 1986 were described on 10 December 1986, *Official Report*, columns *221-24* by the then Paymaster General in his reply to the then hon. Member for Oldham, East.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Cross Media Ownership

Mr. Woodcock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what is the outcome of the investigation by the Office of Fair Trading into cross media ownership; what action he intends to take; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when the Director General of Fair Trading is going to announce the conclusion of his investigation into cross media ownership.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand that the Director General of Fair Trading is still considering competition questions relating to cross media ownership. We are also looking at wider aspects of this issue.

Angola

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement on the opportunities for British firms wishing to export to Angola and the measures his Department has taken to encourage such trade.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: A wide range of services is available to companies under my Department's export initiative. ECGD has short-term cover available for Angola and supports a line of credit for the Takula offshore oilfield development. Opportunities have, however, been limited by Angola's poor economic and security conditions. When peace is restored and plans for economic rehabilitation are fully implemented, there should be increased opportunities for trade.

Companies Act Inspections

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list each continuing Companies Act inspection, giving in each case *(a)* the name of the company under investigation, *(b)* the names of the inspectors, *(c)* the date of their appointment and *(d)* the cost of the inspection to date.

Mr. Forth: The following list provides the information requested.

Company name	*Names of inspectors*	*Date of appointment*	*Cost £*
Minet Holdings plc W M D Underwriting Agencies Ltd	S C Boyd QC P W G DuBuisson FCA	8 November 1982 10 November 1982	1,242,964
Graylaw Holdings Ltd Link Services Stations Ltd	Miss E Appleby QC P W Foss FCA	11 March 1983	280,212
Bank Street Securities Ltd Pennine Commercial Holdings plc	Miss E Appleby QC P W Foss FCA	4 October 1983	481,229
Guinness plc	D T Donaldson QC I G Watt FCA	28 November 1986	1,657,698

Langford Scott and Partners

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total amount of compensation paid to investors by his Department following the investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration of the renewing of the licence under the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act 1958 of Langford Scott and Partners; how many investors were compensated; why his Department thought it appropriate to pay compensation; and whether the compensation paid extended to loss of interest and stress as well as loss of the principal sum invested.

Mr. Forth: My Department paid a total of £51,415 in compensation to 13 investors in Langford Scott and Partners. The payment was *ex gratia* and without acceptance of liability. The compensation paid covered the principal sum invested and loss of interest.

House of Fraser

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the progress of investigations into the purchase of the House of Fraser.

Mr. Forth: No. This is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

EC (Economies of Scale)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish in the *Official Report* an assessment of the industries in which the United Kingdom enjoys the greatest economies of scale within the EEC.

Mr. Forth: The information is not available.

Textiles, Clothing and Footwear

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the reasons for the fall in the production of textiles, clothing and footwear since 1985; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the reduction in the value of output in terms of 1985 prices together with the figures for imports and exports of such goods to the EEC and to other countries.

Mr. Forth: Latest annual figures indicate that there has not been a fall in output in this sector since 1985. The available data are as follows:

Textiles, clothing and footwear

	Gross output (£ million 1985 prices)	*Imports (£ million current)*			*Exports (£ million current)*		
		Total	*EC*	*Other*	*Total*	*EC*	*Other*
1985	12,770	5,793	3,394	2,399	3,040	1,441	1,599
1986	12,870	6,283	3,665	2,618	3,107	1,619	1,488
1987	13,190	7,074	3,868	3,206	3,502	1,950	1,552
1988	13,040	7,652	4,112	3,540	3,560	2,013	1,547
1988[1]	6,510	3,714	2,013	1,701	1,656	940	716
1989[1]	6,330	4,030	2,158	1,872	1,765	1,007	758

[1] January to June.

Classification:

Gross Output: SIC classes 43 and 45.

Trade: SITC divisions 65, 84 and 85

Sources:

Gross Output: Estimates derived from Annual Census of Production (1985 gross output) and Index of Production (current period: January to June figures seasonally adjusted).

Trade: Overseas Trade Statistics.

Computers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the increase in the value and volume of United Kingdom exports of computers since 1985; what percentage of exports in 1985 were (i) imported in substantially the same form and (ii) assembled in the United Kingdom; and what is his estimate of the United Kingdom content of United Kingdom exports of computers in 1985, 1988 and in 1989 to date.

Mr. Forth: The value and volume of United Kingdom exports of computers[1] were as follows:

	£ million	*Thousand units*
1985	705·7	1,241·6
1986	681·7	373·9
1987	847·4	392·8
1988	1,976·0	3,179·0
1989[2]	1,588·3	799·5

[1] Computers are defined as items 752.1, 752.2 and 752.3 of the Standard International Trade Classification, revisions 2 and 3.

[2] January to August 1989.

Notes:

Official statistics do not distinguish between imports of computers for re-export and exports from United Kingdom manufacture.

There are no official estimates for the United Kingdom content of United Kingdom exports of computers.

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom, HMSO.

Average annual percentage increase

	£ million	*Thousand units*
1985 to 1988	41	37

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom, HMSO.

Japan

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of Japanese exports to *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the European Community are covered by voluntary restraint agreements.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In 1988 16 per cent. of Japanese exports to the United Kingdom were covered by an inter-industry voluntary restraint arrangement on cars and commercial vehicles.

As far as the Community is concerned there are no formal restraint arrangements with Japan approved by the Council of Ministers. Because of the nature of such arrangements we cannot be sure what informal arrangements exist within the Community.

Shipbuilding

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish a table showing the number employed in *(a)* the merchant and *(b)* the warship building industry in each of the European Community countries, including the United Kingdom, and for Japan, Korea and Taiwan in 1979 and in the most recent year for which figures are available.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The table shows employment in merchant shipbuilding, in all the countries associated with the OECD working group on shipbuilding, in 1980 and 1987, the most recent year for which figures are available. OECD figures are not available for 1979.

In the United Kingdom, employment in warship building in 1979 was approximately 26,000. At present it is 24,400. Statistics on employment in warship building in other countries are not regularly collected. The information requested will be supplied to the hon. Member as soon as it can be obtained.

Countries	*1980*	*1987*
Federal Republic of Germany	25,000	12,900
Belgium	—	2,546
Denmark	11,400	7,000
Spain	40,600	23,600
France	23,700	8,900
Greece	7,946	5,858
Ireland	—	—
Italy	15,380	9,664
Netherlands	9,600	3,600
Portugal	6,781	5,020

Countries	1980	1987
United Kingdom	24,777	11,499
EEC Total	165,184	90,589
Finland	17,467	11,615
Norway	13,000	3,600
Sweden	11,874	1,350
Europe less EEC	42,341	16,565
Total OECD-Europe	207,525	107,154
Japan	113,000	59,000
Total OECD WP6	320,525	166,153
Turkey	5,307	—
Republic of Korea	42,484	—

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will provide an updated list of the subventions on offer, in credit loan and direct subsidy facilities for the shipbuilding industry in each of the European Community countries, including the United Kingdom, and for Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The OECD working party on shipbuilding produces on a triennial basis a survey of shipbuilding state aid around the world. The latest version of this survey will be issued shortly. I will ensure that a copy is made available to the hon. Member.

Film Industry

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list by year for the last 10 years in real terms the amount of Government subsidy the British film industry has received; and if he will make a statement on the future of Government funding for the industry.

Mr. Forth: Direct Government support for the film industry since 1980-81 consists of the following:

Financial year	British screen finance	National film and television school	British film institute
1980-81	—	1,126	9,219
1981-82	—	1,050	9,248
1982-83	—	1,266	11,219
1983-84	—	1,076	9,167
1984-85	—	1,193	9,289
1985-86	569	1,558	9,281
1986-87	2,204	1,212	10,733
1987-88	2,210	1,195	10,642
1988-89	2,000	1,600	11,300
1989-90	[1]2,000	1,700	11,800

[1] Actual.

In addition to the above, Her Majesty's Government provided funding of £370,000 for British Film Year in 1985-86.

The Eady levy on cinema admissions was in operation during the period 1980 to 1985. Proceeds of the levy were redistributed to the industry as shown in the table:

Levy year[1]	Total payments to industry £000
1980-81	10,244
1981-82	5,865
1982-83	6,287
1983-84[3]	4,496
1984-85	[2]4,452

[1] October to October.
[2] Includes residual assets of the National Film Finance Corporation.
[3] October to May.
Note:—All figures at 1988-89 prices, deflated by RPI, unless otherwise stated.

My Department announced on 20 July 1989 that funding for British Screen Finance Ltd would continue after expiry of the current contracts at the end of 1990 at the present rate of £2 million (actual) a year for the three years 1991-1993. As for future funding for the National Film and Television School and the British Film Institute, I refer the hon. Member to the statement made earlier today by my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts.

Manufacturing Output

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the years 1963, 1968, 1974, 1979, 1984 and 1989 to date the ratio of imports to output of motor vehicles, together with his estimate of the United Kingdom content of cars produced or assembled in the United Kingdom and the relevant weights in the index of manufacturing output.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* No information is available on the United Kingdom content of cars produced or assembled in the United Kingdom. The table shows the ratio of imports to output of motor cars by number for 1963, 1968, 1974, 1979, 1984 and 1989 (January-August) and the relevant weights in the index of manufacturing output for the base years of the index (ie 1963, 1970, 1975, 1980 and 1985).

Motor Cars

Imports as a percentage of output by number		Weights in the index of manufacturing output[1]	
1963	3	1963	28·32
1968	6	1970	19·86
1974	24	1975	20·55
1979	99	1980	14·01
1984	112	1985	17·20
[2]1989	112		

[1] Parts per thousand of manufacturing industry (Divisions 2-4 inclusive).
[2] January to August.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* As a result of the changes in the organisation of Government economic statistics in July, data formerly collected by my Department are now collected by the Central Statistical Office (CSO). The table lists those surveys which were discontinued between 1979 and July 1989.

The policy of my Department has been to make available to the public, subject to confidentiality, the results of all statistical surveys that it has carried out. The CSO is continuing to publish nearly all the data for which it has assumed responsibility, and arrangements for publishing the remainder are currently under review.

Regular statistical series discontinued since 1979

	Year
Quarterly survey of United Kingdom company sources and uses of funds	1980
Monthly inquiry into export prices	1980
Monthly rubber stocks and consumption	1980
Quarterly inquiry into catering turnover	1980
Quarterly inquiry into motor traders' turnover	1980
Annual and quarterly series on international trade and credit extended and received and direct exports	1982
Monthly inquiry into made-up clothing	1985
Monthly admissions and takings for cinemas	1985
Quarterly inquiry into oils and fats in soapmaking	1985
Quarterly inquiry into raw jute	1985
Monthly inquiry into paper and board	1985
Monthly inquiry into waste paper	1985
Quarterly inquiry into pulp	1985
Quarterly inquiry into exports of books and periodicals	1985
Annual inquiry into the film exhibition industry	1985
Monthly inquiry into production and stocks of wood chipboard and consumption of chipboard	1986

Paper and Building Industry

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what area of new planting would be required to enable the forestry industry to displace *(a)* 10 per cent., *(b)* 20 per cent., *(c)* 30 per cent., *(d)* 40 per cent. and *(e)* 50 per cent. of the United Kingdom's current imports of the following raw materials: (i) mechanical pulp, (ii) chemical pulp, (iii) sawn timber, (iv) round logs, (v) paper and (vi) panel products.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The Forestry Commission advises that because of the time it takes trees to grow and produce timber, it is not possible to make any meaningful estimate of the extent to which new planting would displace various categories of wood imports over the next 40 or 50 years, even assuming that these were maintained at current levels. As a DTI Minister I can add nothing to this advice.

Accounts

Sir Michael McNair-Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration his Department has given to reintroducing an exemption for small private companies from filing accounts.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* A proposal to exempt small companies from the requirement to file their accounts is included in the draft directive adopted by the European Commission last year, amending the fourth company law directive on annual accounts. The responses to my Department's consultative document, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House in February, were overwhelmingly opposed to the proposed exemption, and we shall take this into account when negotiations on the draft directive resume.

Building Industry (Safety)

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps and what research his Department has undertaken to encourage safety in the building industry.

Mr. Nicholls: I have been asked to reply.

We will shortly be making the wearing of safety helmets on construction sites compulsory. The Health and Safety Commission has recently published a consultative document setting out proposals for new regulations to strengthen the management of health and safety on construction sites and the Health and Safety Executive's inspectors will be paying more attention to the quality of site management and levels of training and supervision. For the last two years we have met the HSC's requests for resources in full which has allowed real growth in their activities. For example, this includes increasing the number of HSE inspectors devoted to construction by 10 per cent. since 1988 and sponsoring research within the HSE and externally.

Each year the HSE's research and laboratory services division (RLSD) devotes resources to research into safety topics of relevance to the building industry. Information on all such projects is included in the Health and Safety Executive's programme of research and related services, a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library. In addition to sponsoring research, the HSE also provides specialist input and advice to a number of construction-related research projects.

Willow Watermark Disease

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his answer of 10 April to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North, *Official Report*, column *567*, what developments the Forestry Commission has monitored in willow watermark disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave today to his question about the cricket bat willow research group at column *337*.

WALES

EC Funding

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales by what date projects under the integrated operations programme of the European Community in the three counties of rural Wales have to be completed; and whether, in the event of some projects still awaiting completion on that date, there is sufficient flexibility in his arrangements to allow grants to be paid after the integrated operations programme terminal date to enable such work to be finalised without the authorities being penalised by loss of grant.

Mr. Peter Walker: The European Commission's arrangements for the administration of national programmes of Community interest (NPCI) provide that as a general rule physical works on projects to receive European regional development fund grant aid must begin before the end of the programme period and be completed within 12 months after the end of the programme period. Payments can be made for up to two years after the end of the programme period.

For projects receiving aid under the Dyfed, Gwynedd, Powys NPCI physical works should begin before 31 December 1991 and be completed by 31 December 1992. Payments could be made up to 31 December 1993.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy towards the maintaining and developing of cottage hospital facilities in Wales.

Mr. Grist: The term "cottage hospital" is not a formal designation of a type of hospital. The current concept which is closest to the cottage hospital is that of the community hospital. The Welsh Office's policy towards community hospitals was set out in the circular WHSC(IS)66 entitled "Community Hospitals" which was issued in 1974 and updated by the appendix to "Policies and Priorities for Health Services in Wales" published in 1985 and paragraphs 138 and 139 of "The Corporate Management Programme for the Health Service in Wales: Development and Change 1988-1993" issued in 1988. Copies of all three documents are available in the Library.

It is for district health authorities to consider the application of this general guidance to their local circumstances.

Schools (Capitation)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the capitation per pupil, by education authority, for the last available year for *(a)* primary pupils and *(b)* secondary pupils.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This information is not held centrally.

Mortgage Arrears

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many home buyers were in arrears with mortgage payments in the first six months of 1988; and what was the comparable figure during the first six months of 1979.

Mr. Grist: The information is not collected centrally.

Bridging Allowances

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many young people in Wales have been on weekly bridging allowances awaiting placements since the introduction of compulsory YTS.

Mr. Peter Walker: The latest figures available, 1 November 1988 to 30 September 1989, show that 7,448 young people in Wales received bridging allowance whilst awaiting YTS placement. YTS is a voluntary programme, as are all Government training programmes.

YTS

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many young people left their YTS placements four weeks or more before the placements came to an end.

Mr. Peter Walker: During the period 30 September 1988 to 1 October 1989, a total of 19,241 YTS trainees left their placements four weeks or more before the placements came to an end.

Council Housing

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent by Welsh local district councils on housing investment in *(a)* 1988, *(b)* 1979 and *(c)* 1983.

Mr. Grist: Total gross capital expenditure by Welsh local district councils on housing investment for the periods requested are shown in the following table:

	£ million
(a) 1987-88	226·2
(b) 1978-79	105·8
(c) 1982-83	140·5

Ambulance Dispute

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions have been undertaken by his Department in order to try and find an equitable solution to the ambulance dispute in Wales; what representations he has received about referring this dispute to independent arbitration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The proper forum for negotiations is the Ambulance Whitley council where the Department is represented on the management side; this is a national body and no separate discussions have been undertaken for Wales. Representations have been received from one of the unions involved about referring the dispute to arbitration. The Government believe that unilateral access to arbitration would not be helpful in pay negotiations in the NHS, where management must ensure that resources are not diverted away from patient care. We urge the unions to resume negotiations in the Whitley council and call off their action.

Single Parents

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of the population of Wales are single parents; and what is that percentage among homeless persons.

Mr. Ian Grist: From the 1988 labour force survey it is estimated that 2·3 per cent. of the adult population of private households were single parents with children under 16.

Local authority returns indicate that 29 per cent. of all adults in households accepted as homeless by local authorities in Wales in 1988 were recorded as lone parents with dependent children.

Housing Associations

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of new homes built by housing associations in Wales in *(a)* 1988, *(b)* 1989, *(c)* 1979 and *(d)* 1983.

Mr. Grist: The information requested for the years 1979-1988 is available in table 2.3 of "Welsh Housing Statistics No. 9"—a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House. Figures for 1989 are not yet available.

Heart Disease

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those hospitals in Wales which have facilities to treat heart diseases.

Mr. Grist: All general hospitals in Wales are able to offer treatment for patients with heart disease. Specialised facilities for invasive cardiology and cardiac surgery are provided at the University hospital of Wales, Cardiff.

Homelessness

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many homeless people are in temporary accommodation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: On 30 June 1989, the latest date for which figures are available there were 793 households living in temporary accommodation in Wales. The Department is in touch with a wide range of organisations concerned with homelessness and a statement will be made in due course.

Building Societies (Repossessions)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many homes have been repossessed by building societies during 1987, 1988 and so far in the current year in Wales; what was the comparable figure for 1979; what information he has on how many of these homes were owned by first-time buyers; and if he will provide a district-by-district breakdown of these figures.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Pollution Inspectorate

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the effect on Wales of moving the inspectorate of pollution from Cardiff to Bristol; what representations he has received about this move; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The reorganisation of the inspectorate on a regionalised basis provides for the retention of an office in Cardiff.

Education Spending

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out in the *Official Report* figures in respect of education in Wales, showing for the years 1978-79 and 1987-88 *(a)* pupil numbers, *(b)* spending per primary pupil, *(c)* spending per secondary pupil and *(d)* spending on education, and the percentage change, between the two years, the figures having taken inflation into account; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information requested is shown in the table:

	1978-79	*1987-88*	*Percentage change between 1978-79 and 1987-88*
1. *Total numbers of pupils* (Full time equivalents) at January of each year	543,059	455,408	−16
2. *Spending per pupil (£s)*[1]			
Nursery and primary[2]	789·9	1,004·0	+27·1
Secondary	1,086·0	1,488·4	+37·1
3. *Expenditure on education (£000s)*[1]			
Current expenditure	762·696	838,556	+9·9
Gross capital expenditure	47,812	50,305	+5·2

[1] All prices revalued to 1987-88 levels.
[2] Expenditure records do not differentiate between nursery and primary pupils.

Between 1978-79 and 1987-88, expenditure on education in Wales has increased by nearly 10 per cent. in real terms. Taken together with the 86,651 reduction in pupil numbers experienced during the same period, expenditure on each nursery and primary pupil has increased by more than £200 and for each secondary pupil by over £400.

National Health Service Treatment Centres

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many hip operations he expects the treatment centre at Rhydlafar to carry out in its first year;

(2) how many patients at present waiting for hip operations at the Prince Charles hospital, Merthyr Tydfil, he expects will receive their operations at the Rhydlafar treatment centre in its first full year;

(3) what is the estimated cost to establish and run the proposed three treatment centres under the National Health Service.

Mr. Grist: Welsh Office staff are currently finalising the details of operation of treatment centres in discussion with managers and clinicians in the National Health Service. Subject to the satisfactory conclusion of these discussions, I shall write to the hon. Gentleman shortly.

Uniform Business Rate

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many businesses will face rate rises of over 100 per cent. when the uniform business rate is introduced; and how many employ less than 250 employees.

Mr. Peter Walker: The precise effect of the reforms to business rating cannot be assessed until the revaluation of non-domestic property is completed.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will introduce a two-tier uniform business rate in Wales to reduce the levy on the small business sector.

Mr. Peter Walker: No. The transitional arrangements for non-domestic ratepayers which I am introducing provide for a maximum annual increase in real terms for small businesses of 15 per cent., compared to 20 per cent. for large businesses; and small businesses will be able to obtain any reductions to which they may be entitled more quickly than large businesses. It is estimated that 85 per cent. of Welsh properties will fall within the "small" category for these purposes.

DEFENCE

Naval Guns

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he intends to make available funding to Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd. for development of a 155 mm medium calibre naval gun.

Mr. Neubert: There is currently no requirement for this equipment.

Easington (Recruits)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many recruits to Her Majesty's forces are drawn from the Easington constituency and serve in *(a)* the Army, *(b)* the Royal Navy and *(c)* the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Neubert: It is not possible to give figures for the number of recruits who originated from Easington without checking each recruit's personal file. However, the following figures show the number of recruits enlisted at the careers information offices in Durham, Hartlepool and Sunderland, the nearest offices to Easington. It is not possible to separate those actually living in Easington at the time of enlistment.

	RN/RM[1]	*Army*[2]	*RAF*[3]
1987-88	244	423	91
1988-89	286	399	61
1989-90	[4]136	[5]245	[5]32

[1] Royal Navy careers information offices in Hartlepool and Sunderland.
[2] Army careers information offices in Durham, Hartlepool and Sunderland.
[3] Royal Air Force careers information office in Sunderland.
[4] The Royal Navy/Royal Marines figures for 1989-90 are to 6 November 1989.
[5] The Army and Royal Air Force figures for 1989-90 are to 30 September 1989.

It is not possible to give comparable figures for officer applicants, as these are handled centrally.

Seaham Corps

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the present complement of sea cadets and air cadets in the Seaham corps; and how many cadets volunteered for the armed services year by year from 1979 to 1989.

Mr. Neubert: To June 1989, the complement of cadets in the Seaham corps was:

	Number
Sea Cadets	22
Air Cadets	33

The total number of cadets recruited into the armed services during the last 10 years are shown in the table.

Year	*Royal Navy*	*Army*	*Royal Air Force*
1989	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
1988	566	4,444	1,835
1987	576	4,885	1,798
1986	547	4,510	1,902
1985	577	4,561	1,986
1984	[2]—	4,581	2,045
1983	[2]—	2,906	2,225
1982	[2]—	3,134	1,319
1981	[2]—	5,990	949
1980	[2]—	5,985	1,809
1979	724	5,477	2,266

[1] Not yet available.
[2] Not available.

Notes:

1. These figures reflect numbers of Sea Cadets recruited into the Royal Navy and ACF Cadets recruited into the Army and ATC Cadets recruited into the Royal Air Force. Figures are not available for "cross Service".

2. Figures reflect numbers recruited. Information on numbers applying is not held.

Warship Procurement

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect he expects the completion of the internal market to have on warships procurement policy after 1992.

Mr. Neubert: The completion of the internal market does not directly affect policy for the procurement of warships, since member states are allowed under the treaty of Rome to take the measures they consider necessary in the area of procurement of certain defence equipment. It may have an indirect effect in terms of the wider impact of industrial restructuring by our suppliers.

Ex-Service Personnel

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many section 10 certificates have been issued since 1947 in respect of members of the services, excluding those who were nuclear test veterans.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The information could not be provided without disproportionate cost.

Woolwich Arsenal

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about progress on the redevelopment of their part of the royal arsenal, Woolwich, which has already been vacated by his Department.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: Discussions have been held with the London borough of Greenwich to consider possible future uses of the riverside area at royal arsenal west as part of comprehensive disposal framework embracing the entire west and east sites at Woolwich, which we intend to vacate during the period 1993 and 1995. Officials from the Ministry of Defence and the Crown Estate Commissioners attended the Greenwich waterfront conference on 1 November and further meetings are now planned to continue the close working relationship which has been established.

Aircraft Shelters, Boscombe Down

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the intended purpose of the 15 new aircraft shelters at Boscombe Down for which planning permission has been sought by the Property Services Agency;

(2) whether the United States of America Air Force will use any of the 15 new aircraft shelters at Boscombe Down RAF station for which planning permission has been sought by the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

Irish Sea

Mr. Rogers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether any flying training was carried out over Northern Ireland or the Irish sea between 7 and 10 pm on 11 November;

(2) whether any missiles were tested over the Irish sea or Northern Ireland between 7 and 10 pm on 11 November;

(3) whether any projectiles or explosives were tested over the Irish sea or Northern Ireland between 7 and 10 pm on 11 November.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

Performance Guarantees

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will give details of the performance guarantee that is required by his Department for tenders being submitted to his Department;

(2) if he will name the officer, and how he can be contacted, who is responsible for giving details to the general public on a performance guarantee which is required for tenders being submitted to his Department for Ministry of Defence contracts.

Mr. Alan Clark: Performance guarantees are sought from contractors as and when circumstances so demand. Details are provided by the contracts branches responsible for particular tenders.

Merlin Helicopter

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress with integration of electronic systems in the Merlin anti-submarine helicopter.

Mr. Alan Clark: The MOD is examining the scope for appointing a prime contractor responsible for the overall performance of the complete mission system for the Royal Navy anti-submarine warfare variant of the Anglo-Italian EH101 helicopter. A contract has been placed with consultants to write a detailed performance specification, against which bids could be invited next year.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the original target date for completion and the original budget of the Merlin anti-submarine helicopter; and what are the current estimated completion dates and budget.

Mr. Alan Clark: The contractor's latest programme plan forecasts completion of development at the end of 1992, a one-year slippage against their original forecast. The original estimate of total Royal Navy development costs uprated to 1988 economic conditions was £779·6 million, which compares with the current estimate of some £1,000 million at the same economic conditions. It should be noted, however, that the latter estimate makes provision for uprated engines and the appointment of a prime contractor for the Royal Navy mission system, which were not included in the original estimate.

Westland EH101

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent changes have been made to the management of the Westland EH101 project; what are the reasons for these; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: There have been no changes in the MOD's management arrangements for the EH101 project. The MOD is, however, seeking to improve the contractual arrangements for the RN EH101 through the appointment of a prime contractor with responsibility for the overall performance of the complete RN mission system.

Tanks

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many main battle tanks are on order *(a)* under construction and *(b)* not yet constructed;

(2) if he will take action to cancel orders for any main battle tanks not yet under construction.

Mr. Alan Clark: One regiment of Challenger 1 main battle tanks and nine Challenger 2 prototypes are on order. All are under construction.

Defence Staff List

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list all the civil defence authorities that *(a)* have received and *(b)* have not received, the defence staff list document;

(2) why defence staff list documents are being withheld from the South Yorkshire civil defence authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton *[holding answer 6 November 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Industrial Development Board

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all those parcels of land which were owned by Department of Economic Development, LEDU, or the Industrial Development Board, which were zoned for industrial development by the planning authorities and which were sold for non-industrial use in each of the years since 1980, giving details by district council area.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* The industrially zoned land sold by IDB (including Department of Commerce to September 1982) for non-industrial purposes is set out in the table. Neither DED or LEDU sold any land zoned for industrial development for non-industrial use.

District Council	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*1989-90*
Antrim	10·6	0·1	—	—	—	—	8·5	—	—	—
Ballymena	—	—	—	—	—	30·1	—	—	—	—
Belfast	—	—	0·1	—	—	0·4	0·5	—	—	—
Castlereagh	9·1	—	—	—	—	0·1	0·1	0·1	—	—
Craigavon	—	—	—	0·1	0·1	—	—	—	—	—
Derry	—	—	—	—	—	—	0·1	—	—	—
Fermanagh	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0·1	—	—
Limavady	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	82·8	—
Lisburn	0·2	—	—	—	—	0·1	—	—	7·0	—
Newry and Mourne	—	—	—	—	0·1	—	—	0·1	12·4	—
Newtownabbey	—	5·1	—	—	—	0·1	—	—	0·3	—
Omagh	—	0·1	—	—	—	0·1	—	—	—	—

Integrated Schools

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received about the relationships between integrated schools and segregated schools, the provision of integrated nursery education, and the provision of integrated special education; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: A number of views were received about the proposed management structures of controlled integrated schools and we have been able broadly to take these into account. This means that the legislation will continue to provide that in the case of a controlled integrated school which was formerly a controlled (non-grammar) school or a Catholic maintained school, its board of governors will include one seventh trustee representation and one seventh trasferor representation. Other controlled integrated schools will instead have two sevenths of their boards of governors appointed by the Department of Education.

On the question of integrated nursery and special education, nursery and special schools will be ineligible for formal integrated status since admissions are based on specialised criteria to which it would be quite inappropriate to add statutory requirements relating to the religion of pupils. On the other hand, it will be possible for an integrated school to have a nursery or special unit attached to it.

Fire Service

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action has been taken by the fire authority for Northern Ireland to obtain an acceptable fire brigade training site convenient to Belfast which will make training possible in a secure location and which will have the support of the local community.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The fire authority had identified a site at Old Manse road, Whiteabbey, as suitable for a fire brigade training school. Planning permission was refused. The fire authority is now awaiting the outcome of its appeal against that refusal.

Give the uncertainty of this site the fire authority has identified another suitable site at the former St. Nicholas secondary school at Minorca place, Carrickfergus. Conditional planning permission has just been granted. The fire authority has not agreed an acceptable purchase price for the Carrickfergus site. Negotiations are continuing.

One-Teacher Primary Schools

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a list of one-teacher primary schools in each education and library board area in Northern Ireland in the maintained and controlled sectors, together with the number of pupils enrolled at each school.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information is as follows:

Education and library board area	*Primary schools*	*January 1989 enrolment*
Western		
Controlled	None	—
Maintained	Edenderry	22
	Altishane	21
North-Eastern		
Controlled	Bruslee	20
	Newlands	20
Maintained	Culraney	8
	Rathlin Island (St. Mary's)	11
	Tannaghmore	22
	St. Colman's (Greenisland)	24
Southern		
Controlled	Salters Grange	18
	Shinn	13
	Leitrim	12
	Croreagh	21
	Hilltown	8
	Ballykeel West	15
	Ballinderry	22
	Coalisland	14
Maintained	Lislea (2)	12
Belfast		
Controlled	None	—
Maintained	None	—
South-Eastern		
Controlled	None	—
Maintained	None	—

History Teaching

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assurance he can give parents that their children will have the opportunity to study British, European and economic history in the future.

Dr. Mawhinney: The programme of study for history will be drawn up by the history working group. Its report will be subject to wide consultation. I expect these elements to be included.

Council for Roman Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes have been made in the terms of reference of the Council for Roman Catholic Maintained Schools since that body was established.

Dr. Mawhinney: None.

Schools and Colleges (Safety)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the estimated cost of electrical rewiring to meet current safety standards for schools and colleges in the North-Eastern education and library board area.

Dr. Mawhinney: The total estimated cost of electrical rewiring to meet current safety standards for schools and colleges in the NEELB area is not readily available and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost. However, I understand that the NEELB commissioned a study which estimated that it would cost £16 million at 1987 prices to rewire all the board's properties (including schools and colleges) and maintained schools in its area.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals have been made and what funding

will be allocated to the North-Eastern education and library board to correct the hazards in schools brought to his attention in the consultant's report presented to the Department of Education in 1988.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Department of Education (Northern Ireland) allocated an additional £1·6 million to the north-eastern education and library board in the current financial year to supplement the normal maintenance programme financed from its block grant.

It is for the board to determine how these additional funds are used having regard to its own locally determined priorities.

Family Credit

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish figures showing the numbers and percentages of families with children *(a)* entitled to and *(b)* receiving family credit, in April 1988 and 1989, together with projections for April 1990.

Mr. Needham: The number of families receiving family credit between April 1988 and 1989 increased by 1,383 from 13,525 to 14,908.

Reliable estimates of the number of families who were eligible for family credit in Northern Ireland in April 1988 and April 1989 or who might be eligible in April 1990 are not available.

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many farmers, in each district council area of Northern Ireland, are in receipt of hill livestock compensatory allowances;

(2) what is the total amount of hill livestock compensatory allowances which were paid to farmers from each district council area, in each of the years since 1985.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We do not know. Information is not kept by district council area.

Bathing Waters

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give details of proposals for Government spending to improve the quality of bathing waters in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given by my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning on 20 October 1989 to the hon. Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) at columns *261-62*.

Glass

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was *(a)* the total amount of glass used and *(b)* the total amount of glass recycled in Northern Ireland in each of the years since 1980.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Records are not held centrally of the total amount of glass used in Northern Ireland. The information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. At present 10 of the district councils in Northern Ireland operate bottle banks. It is estimated that the volume of glass collected for recycling would be in the region of 600 tonnes per annum. No glass is recycled in Northern Ireland.

ENERGY

Electricity Privatisation

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received regarding the progress of electricity privatisation.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend and I continue to receive representations on a wide variety of topics related to electricity privatisation.

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most recent estimate of the gross cost of electricity privatisation to the national Exchequer; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: It is too early to make an estimate of the likely total costs of privatising the electricity supply industry. However, a provision of £30 million has been made in the supply estimate for 1989-90 in respect of electricity privatisation costs. Expenditure in earlier years was £0·8 million in 1987-88 and £5·5 million in 1988-89.

It is also too early to estimate the likely proceeds from the sale of the companies but experience from previous privatisations has shown them to have an outstanding record of value for money.

Gas Sales

Mr. Knowles: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will meet the Director General of OFGAS to discuss progress towards the competitive sale of gas to industry.

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the Director General of OFGAS to discuss industrial gas pricing structures.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I meet the Director General of Gas Supply regularly and we discuss a range of issues of mutual interest, including progress towards competition in the supply of gas to industry and industrial gas pricing structures.

Tidal Barrages

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what evidence he has received that the River Mersey would provide the most cost-efficient site for the construction of a tidal barrage.

Mr. Peter Morrison: A study by Marinetech North West and Rendel Parkman published in 1985 concluded that the economic viability of a Mersey barrage was promising and that further studies were warranted.

The Mersey Barrage Company is currently carrying out further feasibility studies for a barrage, jointly funded by the Department of Energy, to examine the engineering, environmental and regional impact, the economic viability and the choice of barrage alignment.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what studies his Department is undertaking of French experience in successfully operating a tidal barrage scheme.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Over the last ten years the Severn Barrage committee, the Severn Tidal Power Group, the Mersey Barrage Company, Ministers and Officials have visited La Rance tidal power station in Brittany. Many discussions with Electricite de France and French experts have taken place. The United Kingdom studies of tidal barrage schemes take full account of the French experience.

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to make a decision on the construction of the Mersey barrage.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Department of Energy and the Mersey Barrage Company are jointly funding feasibility studies into a Mersey barrage. The studies are being advanced to determine whether the Mersey Barrage Company can make an economic case for construction of a Mersey barrage. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy met the chairman of the Mersey Barrage Company on 14 November to receive a progress report.

Energy Sources

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to make subsidies available for renewable sources of energy.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Department is already giving substantial financial support to develop renewable sources of energy. We are supporting a major research and development programme aimed at developing commercially viable and environmentally acceptable renewable technologies to contribute to future energy supply. Around 250 projects are currently underway with a contract value of over £60 million and we expect to initiate 70-80 new projects during 1989-90. Over £50 million is earmarked for expenditure on renewable projects over the next three years. These projects include both research and development and a wide range of technology transfer activities designed to aid commercial deployment.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what consultations he has had with the nuclear installations inspectorate regarding safety considerations in managing two or more nuclear power stations on one nuclear site in single or multiple ownership;

(2) what proposals he has for the avoidance of more than one nuclear power station operator having control of generation of any one nuclear island.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the statement which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made to the House on 9 November at column 1175.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consultations he has had with the nuclear installations inspectorate regarding safety considerations in managing nuclear power stations after vesting day in the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My Department maintains close contact with the Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate on all matters relating to nuclear safety. The vesting of the electricity supply industry will not lead to any diminution of existing standards of nuclear safety.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will list each nuclear power station giving the date on which they were authorised, when work commenced, when they were commissioned and when they first produced their design capacity;

(2) if he will list for each nuclear power station their original designed output capacity, their revised output capacity, and their average load factors based on both the original and revised figures;

(3) what is the maximum output achieved by each nuclear power station; and when it was achieved.

Mr. Wakeham: Much of the information requested can be derived from published information. I have, nevertheless, asked the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to write to the hon. Member, as this is an operational matter for the board.

Nuclear Power

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has chosen a sales price levy or a transmission and distribution levy to pay for the extra cost of nuclear power.

Mr. Wakeham: Section 33(2) of the Electricity Act 1989 makes clear that the fossil fuel levy will be calculated by reference to the aggregate amount charged for leviable electricity.

Standing Charges

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate the cost to the Treasury of underwriting the abolition of electricity standing charges for *(a)* all households and *(b)* pensioner households.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The cost of abolishing electricity standing charges for all households in Great Britain is estimated at about £800 million, and for pensioner households in Great Britain at about £190 million.

Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what effect his statement in the House earlier today will have upon jobs and investment at Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories, Berkeley, Gloucestershire.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is primarily a matter for the CEGB and the advisory boards of National Power and the nuclear company. The aim will be to minimise disruption as far as possible.

Electricity Disconnections

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many domestic electricity consumers had their supply cut off in 1978-79 and each succeeding year.

Mr. Wakeham: The Electricity Council informs me that the figures for disconnections in England and Wales are as follows:

	Number
1978-79	87,258
1979-80	98,894
1980-81	118,221
1981-82	108,266

	Number
1982-83	91,334
1983-84	90,722
1984-85	91,039
1985-86	102,714
1986-87	98,823
1987-88	88,910
1988-89	75,230

There is a continued downward trend in disconnections and in the 12 months to the end of September 1989 the figure stood at 72,256.

Gas Disconnections

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many domestic gas consumers had their supply cut off in 1978-79 and each succeeding year.

Mr. Wakeham: This is a matter for British Gas plc. However, I was delighted to note that in the year ended September 1989, disconnections fell by 58 per cent. and that the number of customers disconnected is now lower than at any time since records were first kept in 1977.

Independent Electricity Generation

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the 20 projects from independent electricity generation known to his Department which were referred to by the hon. Member for the City of Chester (Mr. Morrison) on "Newsnight" on Thursday 9 November.

Mr. Wakeham: Contracts for the sale of power from Lakeland Power projects at Roosecote were signed last month. This is the first independent project to proceed. Details of other individual projects are commercial in confidence until the companies involved choose to announce them.

Electricity Boards (Property)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will place in the Library a schedule of all the land and property currently owned by the Electricity Council and each electricity board.

Mr. Wakeham: No. Land and property assets are commercial matters for the industry.

Electricity (Domestic Supplies)

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy in what circumstances he envisages that a domestic electricity consumer will have access to electricity supplies other than the proposed distribution companies.

Mr. Wakeham: The market in supply to customers will be progressively opened up to competition. Although transitionally the domestic consumer will remain a client of the area boards' successors there will be no permanent monopoly in supply.

Electricity Prices

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what arrangements he has made to determine the price charged by the generating boards to the distribution boards from 1 January.

Mr. Wakeham: The price charged by the Central Electricity Generating Board to the area boards is set out in the bulk supply tariff. This was published in March this year and will continue until the end of March 1990.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the additional cost to domestic electricity consumers of the use of electricity from nuclear power stations in 1979-80 and each subsequent year expressed as a percentage.

Mr. Wakeham: The separate cost of nuclear power generation has not in the past been identified in the price of electricity.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of the trend in electricity prices over the next five years.

Mr. Wakeham: It is not our practice to publish forecasts of future energy prices.

Coal Policy

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consideration he has given to the effects on the balance of trade when deciding on policy for the coal industry.

Mr. Wakeham: This Government do not believe that it is in the long-term interests of either the coal industry or the country to restrict competition in coal supplies. To protect British Coal from competition would lead to British industry paying too much for its electricity, thereby reducing its international competitiveness; this would have serious long-term consequences for our balance of trade and employment in our manufacturing industries. The Government will therefore encourage British Coal in its efforts to become a fully competitive supplier.

Industrial Customer Scheme

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had with the European Commission about the qualifying industrial customer scheme.

Mr. Wakeham: None.

BNFL

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the new nuclear company's commitments to British Nuclear Fuels plc.

Mr. Wakeham: National Power has been in negotiation with BNF plc on revised contract arrangements for nuclear fuel services. The new company will be taking these discussions forward.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what estimate he has made of the consequences for the British Nuclear Fuels plc plant at Sellafield of the decisions on the nuclear power programme which he announced on Thursday 9 November;

(2) what is his estimate of the impact on Sellafield and Windscale of the reduction of the immediate pressurised water reactor programme to one power station.

Mr. Wakeham: My statement on 9 November should have no impact on BNFL's operations at Sellafield.

Power Station Boilers

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the total spending in 1979-80 and each succeeding year by his Department and the industries for which it is responsible on improving the efficiency of the combustion of coal in power station boilers.

Mr. Wakeham: The efficiency of combustion of coal in power station boilers has been consistently in the region of 99 per cent. over the last 10 years.

Nuclear Electricity Company

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what will be the insurance arrangements of the new nuclear electricity company.

Mr. Wakeham: The insurance arrangements under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 will apply to the new nuclear company after vesting.

CEGB

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to lay before Parliament the Central Electricity Generating Board's annual report and accounts for 1988-89; and if he will seek an explanation from the Central Electricity Generating Board for their late publication.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Preparation and publication of the annual report and accounts are a matter for the board of the CEGB. I am assured that the accounts will be published as soon as is possible.

Energy Council

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement about the meeting of the Energy Council of the European Community Ministers on 30 October.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The council made progress towards adoption of a new programme for demonstration and dissemination of new energy technologies known as Thermie. However the European Parliament has not yet given its opinion on it and the Commission has not formally put forward an overall budget for the programme.

The Council held a first discussion about four proposals from the Commission intended as steps towards establishing a single energy market and covering transparency of gas and electricity prices, right of transit on electricity networks and for gas networks and notification of investment projects. In the light of comments from member states the proposals have been remitted to officials for detailed examination. The proposals also await consideration by the European Parliament.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Incomes

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will update the answer on incomes to the hon. Member for Birkenhead of 11 July, *Official Report*, column *442-43* to include data for 1986-87.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 14 November 1989.

Means-tested Benefits

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will break down the extra number of people who will become dependent on means-tested benefits due to the freeze in child benefit into *(a)* income support recipients, *(b)* family credit recipients and *(c)* housing benefits recipients.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 10 November to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) at column *812*.

Sick Pay

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish his latest estimates of the numbers of employees who will cease to qualify for the higher rate of statutory sick pay as a result of the recently announced changes to the scheme; and if he will show a breakdown of the figures for male and female employees.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: About 1·9 million employees with earnings between £90 and £125 per week will no longer be eligible for the higher rate of statutory sick pay (SSP) if they fall sick on or after 6 April 1990. But the number of spells of sickness where the amount of SSP entitlement will be reduced will, of course, be much smaller; it is estimated to be about 290,000 out of an annual total of 5·8 million.

It is estimated that about three quarters of those affected will be women. For the majority of employees occupational sick pay will make up any difference in SSP entitlement. All employees already receiving the higher rate of SSP at 6 April 1990 will continue to receive that rate until their current period of entitlement ends, regardless of their earnings.

Of those currently eligible only for the lower rate of SSP, the majority are women in low paid or part-time employment. Such employees are generally less likely to be covered by occupational sick pay schemes, and will thus gain from the real increase which is being made to the lower rate as part of the overall SSP re-structuring. As my right hon. Friend said in his uprating statement, since the flat rate element of statutory maternity pay is the same as this rate of SSP, there will also be a modest gain for up to 230,000 women in this respect.

War Widows

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the number of war widows currently receiving benefit whose husbands were killed in the second world war or the Korean war; and what is the amount of benefit available to them.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: At 30 September this year, 52,217 widows whose husbands died as a result of the second world war, subsequent conflicts and attributable service were receiving a war widows pension under the war pensions scheme administered by the Department. Information about the numbers of those whose husbands were killed in the second world war and the Korean war is not readily available. The standard war widows pension is currently £56·65 a week. In addition, age allowances of

£6·10 at 65, £12·20 at 70 and £13·50 at 80 are paid. A widow receiving a war widows pension may also receive any national insurance benefit earned by her own contributions and some non-contributory benefits.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to increase the benefits paid to war widows of two world wars to make them more comparable with the incomes of widows of service men who died after 1973.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer the right hon. Member to the reply given to him on 8 November at column *673-74*. War widows receiving a war widows pension are eligible in addition for national insurance benefits earned by their own contributions and some non-contributory benefits. As my right hon. Friend reminded the House in his uprating statement on 25 October, from April 1990 we will raise the amount of the war pension or the war widows pension which is disregarded in calculating entitlement to income-related benefits from £5 to £10.

Mobility Allowance

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will review the eligibility criteria for mobility allowance to include people who are visually or mentally handicapped.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on 13 November at column *51*.

Social Fund

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what percentage of applications for grants from the social fund are rejected and the percentage won on appeal within the Seaham and Peterlee areas.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member.

National Insurance (Fraud)

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what was the amount of employees' national insurance contributions collected by employers and subsequently not paid in to the Treasury in 1988, with a regional breakdown; what was the number of cases of national insurance evasion or fraud by employers where his Department took civil proceedings against the employer and the amount of national insurance contributions recovered by his Department as a result of those proceedings; what was the annual cost of crediting national insurance contributions to employees whose original contributions were defrauded by the employer; and what steps are being taken or may be proposed by his Department to counter such fraud by employers.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Inland Revenue is responsible for the collection and enforcement of the majority of national insurance contributions from employers. Although precise figures are not available the Inland Revenue estimates that the total amount of employers' and employees' national insurance contributions not paid over at the end of the accounts year ended 31 October 1988 was about £193 million, of which approximately £93 million relates to employees' contributions. A regional breakdown of these figures is not available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

During 1988-89 the Department of Social Security approved the institution of civil proceedings against employers in 1,522 cases, involving about £4·2 million of national insurance contributions. Because some of these proceedings are not yet complete a final recovery figure is not available. Court action, however, usually results in recovery of 75 per cent. of the debt.

All contributions shown in an employer's annual returns to the Inland Revenue will be credited to the individual employees' records irrespective of whether the employer has remitted the contributions collected. There is, however, no record of the cost of crediting individual contributions which have been shown in employers' returns but not remitted to the Inland Revenue.

In 1988-89 in addition to inspections carried out by Inland Revenue auditors about 2,000 national insurance inspectors were employed in ensuring compliance with national insurance legislation. As part of that process they completed more than 80,000 surveys of employers' records.

Where an individual's national insurance account for any tax year does not contain sufficient contributions to maintain benefit entitlement the contributor is notified. Deficiencies in the record can also come to light when a claim for benefit is made. In all cases of this nature, irregularities are then investigated urgently and will usually reveal any failure by the employer to operate the contributions system properly. These investigative measures are kept under constant review.

Benefits (Young People)

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will make a statement outlining the procedures which are followed in ascertaining whether, for purposes of financial assistance, a young person is genuinely estranged from his or her parents; what evidence is considered in such cases; by whom the decision is made; and what right of appeal exists against any decision.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: All staff dealing with young people have been fully trained, especially on the need for tact and sensitivity when dealing with this vulnerable group. All claims for income support from 16 to 17-year-old claimants are referred to an adjudication officer. Guidance on the treatment of such claims is contained in the adjudication officer's guide. Advance guidance has been given to adjudication officers in AOG (Memo vol. 3/13), a copy of which is in the Library. In addition, the Secretary of State has the power to direct eligibility if the payment of benefit is the only way to prevent severe hardship. A direction takes into account all the individual's circumstances including, if appropriate, estrangement from parents. Once such a direction is made the adjudication officer will consider entitlement in the normal way. All decisions of an adjudication officer carry the right of appeal to an independent appeal tribunal.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security in how many cases since the revised regulations became effective benefits have been paid to young people aged 16 and 17 years because they were deemed to be genuinely estranged from their parents.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The latest available information is that, over the period to the end of September, some 3,100 claims from 16 and 17-years-olds resulted in the award of income support at the higher 18 to 24-year-old

rate because of the changes introduced in July. This includes young people who were estranged from their parents but separate figures are not available for this group.

Severe Disablement Allowance

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what estimate he has made of the number of United Kingdom residents who have been refused payment of the severe disablement allowance on the grounds that they have lived abroad for 10 of the previous 20 years; and what account is taken of whether while abroad, they were treated for tax and national insurance purposes as though they were domiciled in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Nicholas Scott: We estimate that about 1,000 people are unable to qualify for severe disablement allowance, in any year, because they have not been resident in Great Britain for 10 of the preceding 20 years. Those who have paid the required national insurance contributions may be able to qualify for sickness benefit or invalidity benefit and will not therefore be claiming severe disablement allowance.

Family Credit

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many families with children have net incomes, defined as for family credit purposes, within *(a)* £50 and *(b)* £100 a week of their family credit ceilings.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The numbers of families with children whose net earnings and other relevant income are above the level at which family credit entitlement runs out are as follows:

Numbers of families with children[1]

	(millions)
(a) within £50 of run out point	0·93
(b) within £100 of run out point (including *(a)*)	2·20

[1] This excludes any families whose capital is more than £6,000.
Note: Estimates are based on 1985 and 1986 Family Expenditure Survey updated to 1989-90.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish figures showing the estimated numbers and percentages of families with children *(a)* entitled to and *(b)* receiving family credit, in April 1988 and 1989, together with projections for April 1990.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The available information is as follows:

	Number of families eligible for family credit	*Percentage of all families with children*	*Number of families receiving family credit*	*Percentages of all families with children*
April 1988	[1]500,000 employees (self employed not available)	7·4	[2]253,000 employees [2]277,000 including self employed	3·75 4·10
April 1989	Not known until 1989 FES data become available	—	286,000[3]	4·23
April 1990 (projected)	Not known until 1990 FES data become available	—	Up to date projection[4] not available	—

[1] From Family Expenditure Survey (FES) data for April to December 1988.
[2] Average for April to December 1988.
[3] As at end of April 1989.
[4] Latest actual caseload figure 320,000 for July 1989 (4·73 per cent. of all families).

A further advertising campaign started in the week commencing 6 November.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how the family credit ceilings are arrived at; and what criteria are used to establish *(a)* need and *(b)* the need for uprating.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Under the Social Security Act 1986 entitlement to family credit is determined by reference to the maximum family credit in the particular case, which is made up of age-related child credits for each child and an adult credit which is the same for both lone parents and two parent families, and to the family credit applicable amount or threshold. If the family's income to be taken into account is no more than the threshold then the maximum family credit for that family is payable in full. If the income is more than the threshold then 70 per cent. of the excess is deducted from the maximum family credit and the amount remaining, if 50p or more, is payable.

The family credit ceiling represented by the highest amount of net earnings and other relevant income a family can have and still qualify for family credit is therefore the level of such earnings and income which, on the above basis, produces an entitlement of 50p per week.

The child credits, the adult credit and the applicable amount are set so as to create an alignment between the benefits available to those families in work and those out of work which will help to ensure that families will generally be better off in work than when unemployed.

As with other income-related benefits, the credits and the applicable amount in family credit are reviewed each year in the light of the movement in the level of retail prices excluding housing costs.

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish figures showing the family credit ceilings for one and two-parent families of different sizes, with children of different ages, in April 1988, 1989 and 1990, at constant and at current prices, and as percentages of past and projected average male and average female manual earnings, as appropriate.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I will write to my right hon. Friend when the information requested is available.

Job Transfers

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is the number of jobs from his Department that are to be transferred to Scotland.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: After taking account of efficiency savings due to be made after implementation of the operational strategy the latest estimate shows that 470 posts will be relocated into Glasgow social security centre.

Widows' Pensions

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what is his most recent estimate of the loss to the Exchequer if widows' pensions were to be exempted from the earnings rule.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: None. The payment of widow's pension is not subject to an earnings rule.

Hostels (Young People)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will extend the recent concessions for night shelters for homeless young people to cover hostels.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We have no plans to change the arrangements at present, but will monitor carefully all aspects of the hostel changes.

National Insurance

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has yet completed his review of national insurance contributions for 1990-91.

Mr. Newton: I have completed the annual review under section 120 of the Social Security Act 1975. The proposals will take effect from April 6 1990.

Employers and employees

As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in his statement earlier today, I do not propose to change the standard rates of contributions for either employees or employers, which remain at 9 per cent. and 10·45 per cent. respectively.

In line with the Social Security Pensions Act 1975, the lower earnings limit for class 1 contributions is to be raised to £46 a week, which is just below the basic retirement pension rate for a single person, which I announced to the House on 25 October. The upper earnings limit is to be raised to £350 a week, which is almost seven and a half times the new basic pension rate as provided by the Social Security Pensions Act. The new earnings limits will replace the current ones of £43 and £325 respectively.

Under the new structure which came into force on 5 October employees whose earnings reach the lower earnings limit will continue to pay an initial contribution of 2 per cent. of that limit and standard rate contributions of 9 per cent. on that portion of earnings which exceeds the lower but not the upper earnings limit. The reduced contribution rates of 5 per cent. 7 per cent. and 9 per cent. for employers of the lower paid will continue unchanged. However the ceilings for these rates will be extended further; they will now apply to weekly earnings which fall below the ceilings of £80, £125, and £175 (the previous ceilings were £75, £115 and £165 respectively).

Not contracted-out employees and their employers

Neither the employee nor his employer will have to pay any contributions if earnings are less than £46 a week. Those whose earnings do not exceed £325 (the former upper earnings limit) will pay 21p a week less in contributions than at present. This is because a further £3 of their weekly earnings will be subject to a 2 per cent. deduction rather than 9 per cent. For those employees with earnings above £325 a week, the maximum possible increase will be £2·04 a week. Employers contributions will generally be unchanged although some employers will gain where employees' earnings which were above the former ceilings fall below the new ceilings. There will be no corresponding increase for employers of the higher paid since there is no upper earnings limit for employers' contributions.

Contracted-out employees and their employers

Contracted-out employees will gain in the same way. The contributions due from employees earning less than £325 a week will drop by 15p a week. For employees earning over £325 a week the maximum possible increase will be £1·60 a week. Their employers will generally pay 11 or 12p a week more than at present because they will have to pay not contracted-out contributions on the first £46 of earnings rather than the present lower limit of £43 a week, although there will be gains in respect of lower paid employees whose earnings fall between the old and new ceilings for reduced rate contributions.

Self-employed people

The flat rate class 2 contribution will be raised by 30p to £4·55 a week.

The rate of class 4 contributions, currently 6·3 per cent., will not be increased. The annual limits of profits between which class 4 contributions are paid will be raised to £5,450 and £18,200 from £5,050 and £16,900 respectively. Self-employed people who pay only class 2 contributions will pay an extra £15·60 a year in 1990-91.

For those self-employed people with profits between £5,450 and £16,900 (the former upper profits limit) class 4 contributions will be reduced by £25·20 per year in 1990-91 assuming an unaltered level of profits. For those self-employed people with profits at or above the proposed upper profits limit of £18,200 in 1990-91, the annual charge for class 4 contributions will be £56·70 higher.

Class 3 (voluntary) contributions

The rate of class 3 contributions will be raised to £4·45 a week.

Employment protection allocation

There will be no employment protection allocation for 1990-91.

National Health Service allocation

The allocation to the National Health Service, currently 1·05 per cent. from employees and 0·9 per cent. from employers, will not be changed.

The draft order, together with a report by the Government Actuary, will be laid before Parliament shortly.

Guildford Four

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will take steps to credit the Guildford Four with class 1 national insurance contributions for the full period of their detention.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: There are no legislative provisions which would enable credits to be awarded in these cases. However, I should be prepared to examine

representations from the individuals concerned in respect of their contribution records and to consider whether alternative arrangements might be made.

Household Incomes

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will present the data in the answer given to the hon. Member for Birkenhead on 11 July, *Official Report*, columns *442-3*, as cumulative totals for the years 1979 to 1985, both for percentage changes in living standards and for money changes in real household incomes; and if the data for the latter could be presented for two-person housholds, and for two-person households with one, two and four children.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* The available information, which is adjusted for household size and composition, is set out in the table. Cumulative percentage changes in real equivalised household incomes by deciles of all individuals are set out in table 1. Tables 2 to 6 show what the figures in table 1 represent in terms of changes in real income for various household compositions.

Deciles of individuals in households—Great Britain

Table 1
Percentage changes in living standards (real equivalised household incomes) by decile of individuals in households

Decile	1979-81	1979-83	1979-85
Lowest	−2·2	−1·6	5·9
2	−0·4	1·4	5·0
3	−1·3	0·3	3·4
4	−1·4	−0·5	3·6
5	−1·1	−0·7	4·1
6	−0·7	−0·2	5·7
7	−0·7	−0·1	6·2
8	0·7	0·8	8·7
9	2·7	3·1	10·3
Highest	11·5	10·1	18·2
Total	2·2	2·5	8·8

Table 2
Money change in real household incomes for a single person household—1985 prices by deciles of the whole population £ per week

Decile	1979-81	1979-83	1979-85
Lowest	−0·70	−0·60	2·00
2	−0·20	0·70	2·30
3	−0·70	0·20	1·90
4	−0·80	−0·30	2·10
5	−0·70	−0·50	2·80
6	−0·50	−0·10	4·20
7	−0·60	−0·10	5·20
8	0·60	0·70	8·30
9	3·00	3·50	11·40
Highest	18·00	16·00	28·40
Total	1·70	2·00	6·90

Notes:
1. Income is defined as income from all sources less income tax and national insurance contributions.
2. The incomes of all individuals within households have been adjusted for the size and composition of those households.
3. The equivalence scales used to adjust for household size and composition use as their basis the income for a single person household. In other words, a single person household has been attributed an equivalence scale of one so that the income of these households is the same both with and without equivalisation.

Table 3—Money change in real household incomes for a two person household—(married couple) 1985 prices by deciles of the whole population £ per week

Decile	1979-81	1979-83	1979-85
Lowest	−1·20	−0·90	3·30
2	−0·30	1·10	3·70
3	−1·20	0·30	3·10
4	−1·40	−0·50	3·50
5	−1·20	−0·80	4·60
6	−0·80	−0·20	6·90
7	−1·00	−0·20	8·60
8	1·00	1·20	13·60
9	4·80	5·80	18·80
Highest	29·50	26·30	46·60
Total	2·80	3·20	11·30

Notes:
1. Income is defined as income from all sources less income tax and national insurance contributions.
2. The incomes of all individuals within households have been adjusted for the size and composition of those households.
3. The equivalence scales used to adjust for household size and composition use as their basis the income for a household consisting of a married couple only. In other words, a married couple household has been attributed an equivalence scale of one so that the income of these households is the same both with and without equivalisation.

Table 4—Money change in real household incomes for a household consisting of a married couple plus one child—1985 prices by deciles of the whole population £ per week

Decile	1979-81	1979-83	1979-85
Lowest	−1·50	−1·10	4·00
2	−0·40	1·30	4·60
3	−1·40	0·30	3·80
4	−1·70	−0·60	4·30
5	−1·50	−1·00	5·70
6	−1·00	−0·30	8·50
7	−1·20	−0·20	10·60
8	1·30	1·50	16·70
9	6·00	7·10	23·10
Highest	36·30	32·30	57·30
Total	3·50	3·90	13·83

Table 5—Money change in real household incomes for a household consisting of a married couple plus two children—1985 prices by deciles of the whole population £ per week

Decile	1979-81	1979-83	1979-85
Lowest	−1·70	−1·30	4·80
2	−0·40	1·60	5·40
3	−1·70	0·40	4·50
4	−2·00	−0·70	5·10
5	−1·80	−1·20	6·80
6	−1·20	−0·30	10·10
7	−1·40	−0·20	12·50
8	1·50	1·70	19·80
9	7·10	8·40	27·40
Highest	43·10	38·30	68·10
Total	4·20	4·70	16·40

Table 6—Money change in real household incomes for a household consisting of a married couple plus four children—1985 prices by deciles of the whole population £ per week

Decile	1979-81	1979-83	1979-85
Lowest	−2·30	−1·80	6·30
2	−0·60	2·10	7·10
3	−2·20	0·50	5·90
4	−2·70	−0·90	6·60
5	−2·30	−1·50	8·90
6	−1·60	−0·40	13·20
7	−1·90	−0·30	16·50
8	2·00	2·30	26·10
9	9·30	11·10	36·00

Decile	1979-81	1979-83	1979-85
Highest	56·70	50·40	89·50
Total	5·50	6·20	21·60

Community Charge

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will show the effects of the proposed community charge benefit taper of 15 per cent. with tapers of *(a)* 12·5 per cent., *(b)* 10 per cent.and *(c)* 7·5 per cent., by showing for each of these tapers the cost at 1989-90 prices of paying community charge benefit to each of the following categories of income units, showing for each category how many income units he estimates would be entitled to community charge benefit (i) all income units, (ii) income units consisting of a single person over pensionable age, (iii) income units consisting of a couple both of whom are over pensionable age, (iv) income units consisting of a single person with dependent children, (v) income units consisting of a single person without dependent children, (vi) income units consisting of a married or cohabiting couple without dependent children, (vii) income units consisting of a married or cohabiting couple with dependent children and (viii) any income units not included in the above categories.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* I shall write to the hon. Member.

NATIONAL FINANCE

EC Economic and Finance Council

Sir Fergus Montgomery: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of the latest meeting of the European Community's Economic and Finance Council.

Mr. Major: The ECOFIN Council met in Brussels on 13 November. I represented the United Kingdom.

The Council discussed proposals for revised decisions on the promotion of economic convergence and on co-ordination between central banks and a common position was reached on the relevant legal texts. These texts form part of the stage I programme for economic and monetary union, which the Community has agreed will begin on 1 July 1990. Future economic and monetary arrangements beyond stage I were also discussed. It was agreed that the papers discussed by the Council, including the United Kingdom's paper "An Evolutionary Approach to Economic and Monetary Union", should be forwarded for further discussion at the next meeting of the European Council in Strasbourg.

On the abolition of fiscal frontiers, outline procedures for applying VAT and excise duties to intra-Community commercial transactions were agreed, involving minimal burdens for businesses and tax administrations.

Proposals for strengthened mutual assistance arrangements between tax authorities were considered. Discussions will continue.

It was agreed, at the request of Portugal, that the Commission and the Economic Policy Committee should undertake a study into the decline of household saving in the Community.

A proposed amendment to the solvency ratios directive by the European Parliament was also discussed and will be further considered at the December meeting.

Customs and Excise (Relocation)

Mr. French: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any decision has been taken about the relocation of Customs and Excise headquarters work from London and Southend; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: In June 1988 the board of Customs and Excise set up an internal review to examine the scope for relocating headquarters work from London and the south-east. The review team's report is published today and I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library.

The Paymaster General and the board of Customs and Excise have decided to accept the review team's recommendation that a substantial proportion of headquarters work should be relocated. Altogether some 1,700 posts will be transferred out of the south-east, and around 250 posts transferred from London to Southend. The number of headquarters posts in London will be reduced by about 40 per cent. to around 900, and in Southend by about 30 per cent. to 2,100. The relocation moves are planned to take place in stages over three years beginning in the autumn of 1990.

Final decisions have not yet been taken on a site or sites for relocation; the board of Customs and Excise intends to consult staff and the departmental trade union side before reaching a final conclusion early in the new year. The board's present view, however, is that the majority of the relocated posts might be sited in Liverpool, where a small part of the Department's headquarters is already sited, and in Manchester.

These changes are expected to produce significant benefits both in terms of costs and staffing. Accommodation costs in particular will be reduced, and the opportunities for recruitment and retention of staff will be substantially improved. At least 1,300 jobs will be available for filling locally which will boost the economy of those areas eventually chosen for relocation.

Capital Investment

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the percentage rate of growth in capital investment in fixed assets for each year 1979 to 1989 in *(a)* manufacturing industry and *(b)* other production industries on the assumption that all firms transferred from the public sector to the private sector during the decade had been in the private sector from before 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In classifying businesses to industries no distinction is made between the public and private sectors. Within industry groups, sectorial estimates which allow for classification changes are not available, for reasons of confidentiality. Available information for all businesses in the specified industry groups is shown in table 13·7 of "United Kingdom National Accounts" 1989 edition.

European Community

82. **Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish for each and for the six original members of the EEC the average annual rate of growth in 1959-73, 1973-79 and 1979-88.

Mr. Ryder: GNP/GDP figures for the six original members of the EEC are published by the OECD in "National Accounts Volume I 1960-1987", and for 1988 in "Main Economic Indicators".

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make it his policy to resist any extension of the European Economic Community's powers into any field for which he is responsible.

Mr. Ryder: All proposals for Community action are examined carefully as a matter of course. The Government's general approach is based on the principle of subsidiarity, namely, that action should be taken at national level unless it can be better undertaken at Community level. This approach is generally shared by other member states and the European Commission.

RPI (Holiday Costs)

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made by the Retail Price Index Advisory Committee in its consideration of the inclusion of holiday cost expenditure in the retail price index; and when he expects a report to be published.

Mr. Ryder: Officials are working on a paper on this difficult subject. It is hoped that the advisory committee will complete its work programme during 1990.

Income Tax

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the effect on the Exchequer of each 1 per cent. cut in the higher rate of tax from 60 per cent. to 40 per cent.

Mr. Lilley: The 1988 Financial Statement and Budget report estimated the cost of abolishing higher rates above 40 per cent. at £965 million in 1988–89 and £2,070 million in 1989–90. These estimates did not include behavioural effects.

EC Budget

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the causes of trade with the EEC in invisibles falling into deficit in 1988; what is his forecast for the current year; and how much of the deficit is accounted for by the United Kingdom's net contribution to the EEC budget.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The balance on transactions in invisibles with EC countries and institutions improved in 1988. Invisibles transactions with the EC are not identified separately in Treasury forecasts. Data on the components of invisibles transactions with the EC can be found in tables 10.1 and 10.2 of the CSO Pink Book.

Statistics

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the increase in capacity utilisation in manufacturing industry between 1987 and 1988 as a result of the increase in demand; what is the increase in 1989; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the increase in the volume of United Kingdom imports and output of consumer, investment and intermediate goods from 1985 to 1988 and from 1970 to 1973, together with the degree of capacity utilisation and the level of unemployment in 1973 and 1988.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information requested on United Kingdom unemployment, imports and domestic production of consumer, investment and intermediate goods is available from the Monthly Digest of Statistics and CSO Monthly Review of External Trade Statistics, copies of which are in the House of Commons Library. Because of differences of coverage and definition, the United Kingdom production and import figures classified by end use are not sufficiently close for meaningful comparison between the two. There are no official estimates of capacity utilisation, but the CBI publishes various data on capacity in its quarterly *Industrial Trends Survey*, copies of which are also in the Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase in *(a)* the nominal value of sterling against the deutschmark between July 1985 and February 1987 and *(b)* the increase in wages and salaries per unit of output in (i) manufacturing, (ii) the rest of the economy and (iii) the rate of inflation.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The figures can be readily derived from the information in the Central Statistical Office databank, accessible through the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment the Goverment have made of the contribution made to cost and price inflation by excessive wage claims in the industries making internationally-traded goods; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for the year to last April the percentage increase in earnings, including overtime of (i) the median and quartile full-time male manual workers in footwear, textiles, clothing and mechanical engineering and (ii) the corresponding figures for non-manuals in retailing and financial and business services.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Government's economic policy bears down on inflation through tight monetary policy. Excessive wage claims threaten job prospects.

The requested information on earnings available from the new earnings survey is published in tables 74 (for manuals) and 75 (for non-manuals) in parts C of the 1988 and 1989 reports, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the share of United Kingdom exports of manufactured goods in 1979, 1985 and 1988 which were imported in substantially the same form and the share of the rest which was imported in the form of manufactured materials and components; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for consumer, capital and intermediate goods the ratio of imports to output by volume and value in 1979, 1985, 1988 and in 1989 to date.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information on which to base an estimate of the share of United Kingdom exports of manufactured goods which were imported in substantially the same form is not available. The share of United Kingdom exports which were imported in the form of manufactured materials and components is not readily available for manufactured goods and could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

The definitions of consumer, capital and intermediate goods used for imports and output are not sufficiently close for ratios to be meaningful.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* the percentage fall in the real value of the dollar against sterling and deutschmark since 1985 and the United States share of United Kingdom exports of finished manufactures in the same period.

Mr. Norman Lamont: There is no single definition of real exchange rates and bilateral real exchange rates are not published by the IMF or OECD. Series of bilateral nominal exchange rates and various price indices for the relevant countries are published by the IMF in "International Financial Statistics". Data on the destination of United Kingdom exports of finished manufactures are published by the CSO in "Overseas Trade Statistics".

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what factors he ascribes the increase in the deficit in trade in manufacturers in 1988 and 1989 to date; what was the percentage increase in gross domestic product and in manufacturing output in 1988; how these increases have been reflected in the increase since 1973, 1979 and 1985 in imports and output of shoes, textiles, clothing, mechanical machinery and metal goods; what was the 1988 increase in gross domestic product in manufacturing output and in investment in industry; and whether he will provide similar figures for 1983.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The increase in the trade deficit in manufactures in 1988 and 1989 is the result of strong growth in investment, and the fall in personal saving. All the data requested can be found on the CSO's computer databank, which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect on imports and on exports to third countries, including the United States of a stable exchange rate between sterling and the deutschmark, and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage of United Kingdom exports of manufactures which go to third countries and the ratio of imports of manufactures from and exports to the EMS countries together with the value figures in the current year to date at an annual rate.

Mr. Ryder: The effect on exports to and imports from third countries of stability in the sterling deutschmark rate would depend on how these currencies moved against those of third countries, as well as on developments in the United Kingdom and German economies.

Data on the origin and destination of exports and imports are published by the CSO in "Overseas Trade Statistics."

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the level of sterling against the deutschmark and the average for January-February 1987.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. Member to table 13·1 of "Financial Statistics" published monthly by the Central Statistical Office, copies of which are in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the coverage of consumer, intermediate and capital goods in the output figures includes products which are classified on importation as semi-manufactures; what proportion of imports of semi-manufactures and of finished consumer, intermediate and capital goods were accounted for by final demand; and whether he will provide similar estimates based on the input-output matrix for 1985.

Mr. Norman Lamont: *(a)* The coverage of consumer, intermediate and capital goods in the output figures includes products which are classed on importation as semi-manufactures.

(b) No estimates exist which give the proportion of imports of semi-manufactures and of finished consumer, intermediate and capital goods accounted for by final demand, and to derive these estimates would involve disproportionate costs.

(c) To derive estimates from the 1985 input-output tables of the proportion of imports of semi-manufactures and of finished consumer, intermediate and capital goods accounted for by final demand would involve disproportionate costs, due to the lack of consistency between the industry classification of the input-output groups and the coverage of the semi-manufactures, finished consumer, intermediate and capital goods headings.

Exchange Rate Mechanism

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government have considered how the United Kingdom deficit on current account will be eliminated if sterling is locked into the ERM of the EMS in the foreseeable future; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the deficit with the EEC and with the rest of the world in 1970, 1973, 1979, 1988 and the forecast for 1989.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The current account deficit will narrow as domestic demand continues to slow. The timing of United Kingdom entry into the ERM is unlikely to make much difference to this. For the balance on current account with the EC I refer the hon. Member to table 10.1 of the CSO's Pink Book. Figures for earlier years are available on the CSO databank. A forecast for the current account deficit in 1989 is published in the Autumn Statement.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make it his policy to link the £ sterling to the deutschemark within the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system only on conditions which ensure that British goods became and remain competitive.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's description in the House on 2 November at column 490 of the factors that will determine when the United Kingdom will join the exchange rate mechanism.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what consideration the Government, in considering the effect of tying sterling to the deutschemark within the ERM of the EMS, have given to the effect of that on the French economy.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's description in the House on 2

November at column 490 of the factors that will determine when the United Kingdom will join the exchange rate mechanism.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the Government's policy on the eight conditions on which the then Government insisted in the Green Paper on the EMS Cmnd. 7405; how many have since been met; and whether the Government will continue to insist on full acceptance of the eight conditions as a condition for tying sterling to the deutschemark within the ERM of the EMS.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government will publish a Green Paper on the European monetary system to examine to what extent, the reservations expressed in Cmnd. 7405 have been met.

Mr. Lilley: The Government have already set out clearly the factors that will determine when the United Kingdom will join the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make it his policy to ensure before agreeing to enter the ERM of the EMS that the obligations on creditor and debtor countries are symmetrical as regards wages, prices, interest rates and the money supply.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. Member to my earlier replies to him today.

Balance of Trade

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has made any assessment of the likely effect of a reduction in the United States deficit on trade in manufacture on the balance of trade between the United Kingdom and the United States in circumstances where sterling was tied to the deutschemark within the EMS at not less than the current rate of exchange.

Mr. Ryder: The effects of developments in the United States economy, including the trade deficit, on the United Kingdom economy are regularly assessed in the preparation of official forecasts.

Imported Machinery

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the input-output tables for 1984 and each succeeding year include as an import, depreciation on the stock of imported machinery in place.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Depreciation on the stock of imported machinery in place is not included as an import in the 1984 or 1985 input-output tables. The next set of full input-output tables will be for 1989, published in 1993.

Incomes

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish figures showing the net incomes, after income tax, national insurance contributions and child benefits, in 1979 and 1989 of single people and single-wage married couples with two and four children, at 66 per cent., 100 per cent., 150 per cent., 200 per cent. and 500 per cent. average male earnings *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* with the net incomes of the families with children expressed as percentages of the relevant net incomes of the single people.

Mr. Major: The information is in the tables.

Net income after income tax, national insurance contributions and child benefit (£ per week)

	Percentages of average earnings[1]				
	66 per cent.	*100 per cent.*	*150 per cent.*	*200 per cent.*	*500 per cent.*
Married couple with one earner and 2 children					
1979-80	64·97	88·60	125·22	163·44	327·96
1989-90[2]	157·03	218·88	317·77	410·73	906·63
Married couple with one earner and 4 children					
1979-80	72·97	96·60	133·22	171·44	353·50
1989-90[2]	171·53	233·38	332·27	425·23	921·13
Single					
1979-80	53·22	76·85	113·47	151·30	312·46
1989-90[2]	134·89	196·73	295·62	383·99	879·89

[1] Average earnings are those for full time males working a full week at adult rates in all occupations. They are £109·30 per week in 1979-80 and assumed to be £275·50 in 1989-90, an increase of 7½ per cent. on average earnings in 1988-89.
[2] Provisional.

Net income of one earner married couple with 2 children as a percentage of net income of single person on same level of earnings

	Percentages of average earnings[1]				
	66 per cent.	*100 per cent.*	*150 per cent.*	*200 per cent.*	*500 per cent.*
1979-80	122·1	115·3	110·4	108·0	105·0
1989-90[2]	116·4	111·3	107·5	107·0	103·0

Net income of one earner married couple with 4 children as a percentage of net income of single person on same level of earnings

	Percentages of average earnings[1]				
	66 per cent.	*100 per cent.*	*150 per cent.*	*200 per cent.*	*500 per cent.*
1979-80	137·1	125·7	117·4	113·3	113·1
1989-90[2]	127·2	118·6	112·4	110·7	104·7

Sterling

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the influence of the interest rate differential between West Germany and the United Kingdom on the value of sterling; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's speech during the Opposition Day debate on 31 October, *Official Report*, column 204.

Transmission Mechanism

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his assessment of the transmission mechanism between a fall in interest rates and any increase in the rate of inflation in terms of *(a)* the money supply, *(b)* the fiscal balance, *(c)* labour unit costs and *(d)* the cost of living, including mortgage costs.

Mr. Ryder: Monetary conditions need to be considered as a whole and it is neither sensible nor possible to give precise estimates of the effects of interest rate changes working through each individual channel.

Short-term Funds

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a list showing the size of inflows of short-term funds, their contribution to the money supply and their effect on the price of assets and on the incomes of those who deal in assets; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: Figures showing the inflows of funds to banks and building societies are published regularly in the Bank of England *Quarterly Bulletin*. Inflows into non-residents' accounts do not count towards M4. No estimates of the effects on asset prices or the incomes of those dealing in assets are available.

Consumption

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the effect at the margin of an increase in personal expenditure on consumption on the balance of payments; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* his estimate of the effect of an increase of £100 in such expenditure in terms of the amount of such £100 spent of United Kingdom output of goods and services, respectively, and the corresponding increases in imports and loss of exports.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The balance of payments effect of an increase in consumers' expenditure will depend on why it has increased. For example, if higher income from domestic production is the cause, the effect on the current account may be negligible. On the other hand, with output unchanged higher consumers' expenditure would probably involve some deterioration in the balance of trade.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the increase in consumption in 1988 and the current year to date can be attributed to those in the top and bottom quartiles of incomes; and what is his estimate of the import content in each case.

Mr. Norman Lamont: An analysis of consumers' expenditure is not available in the form requested. Estimates of household expenditure, by income, for 1988 will be published early next year in a report of the family expenditure survey.

Imported Manufactures

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a matrix table showing for columns 6-21 of table 2·6 in the 1989 Blue Book, together with a total for these columns, the value of imported manufactured goods less food, drink and tobacco and where possible imported services.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information required can be obtained by simply aggregation of the imports use matrix given in table 3 of the CSO publication "Input-output tables for the United Kingdom 1985", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the extent to which the increase in imports of manufactured goods in 1988 and in the current year to date was due to lack of United Kingdom production capacity; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the industries which were unable to increase output to meet the increase of demand together with a table showing in each case the volume of output and imports in 1988, the current year to date, 1973 and 1979.

Mr. Norman Lamont: It is difficult to make precise estimates of the effect of capacity constraints on manufactured imports. However, the CBI quarterly industrial trends survey reported a high proportion of firms working at capacity in 1988 and early 1989, particularly in consumer goods industries. More recent surveys have shown an easing in capacity constraints. The data requested can be found on the CSO's computer databank which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Imports and Exports

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* in constant prices and as a percentage the increase in 1972-73, 1987-88, 1970 to 1973 and 1985 to 1988 in incomes, wages and salaries, disposable incomes, consumer's expenditure, imports and exports of manufactures and consumption of durables, clothing etc. and other goods.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Information at constant prices, as constant is available, from which percentage changes may be derived, may be found in Government statistical service publications, available from the Library of the House, or on the Central Statistical Office databank, which may be accessed through the Library.

Monetary Union

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect the measures listed in paragraph 4 of "An Evolutionary Approach to Economic and Monetary Union" will have on output and employment in manufacturing industry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Stage 1 of economic and monetary union as described in the Delors report will

increase freedom of trade and create many opportunities for manufacturing industry to expand its output and employment.

Bank of England (Intervention)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the inflow of funds in response to intervention by the Bank of England in the foreign exchange market in 1987, 1988 and the current year to date have been fully sterilised; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the debt instruments issued for this purpose and their value.

Mr. Ryder: It is not sensible to hypothecate over or underfunding to individual components of the funding rule, such as intervention.

Details of transactions in marketable Government debt are published in the Bank of England *Quarterly Bulletin*.

Plant and Machinery

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why the Government decided to stop publishing figures for investment in plant and machinery in table 1 of the monthly digest; and if he will publish the quarterly figures since 1987 in the *Official Report*.

Mr. Lilley: Publication was delayed until estimates of an acceptable quality could be prepared. It was resumed in the September edition of the monthly digest.

National Debt

Sir Peter Hordern: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the size of the national debt in *(a)* 1964, *(b)* 1970, *(c)* 1974, *(d)* 1979 and *(e)* at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Ryder: Figures for the national debt are given in the table, which also shows the national debt as a share of GDP.

National debt at end of March

	£ billion	Per cent. of GDP
1964	30·2	92·3
1970	33·1	65·7
1974	40·5	50·5
1979	86·9	46·1
1989	197·4	39·5

Sources:
1964 to 1979 Financial Statistics, June 1989.
1989 Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin, November 1989.

Earnings Statistics

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list his estimates of the numbers and percentages of *(a)* all adults below pensionable age, *(b)* all adult men aged under 65 years, *(c)* all adult women aged under 60 years, *(d)* all single adults below pensionable age, *(e)* all single adults in households including three or more adults, *(f)* all those married women aged under 60 years whose husbands have gross weekly incomes in excess of £55·36 per week but below £150 per week, and *(g)* those married women aged under 60 years whose husbands have gross weekly incomes in excess of £150 per week in the following weekly income ranges: up to £53·56, £53·56 to £60, £60 to £80, £80 to £100, £100 to £120, £120 to £140, £140 to £160, £160 to £200, £200 to £220, £220 to £240 and over £240.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* Available estimates for 1989-90 are in the tables. The estimates are based on projections from the 1986 family expenditure survey and are provisional.

Married women by husband's income and by range of income liable to tax 1989-90

Range of wife's weekly income (lower limit)	Married women aged under 60 whose husbands have weekly incomes: Over £53·56 but less than £150		Over £150	
£	thousands	per cent.	thousands	per cent.
0	1,010	59·4	3,910	50·4
53·56	50	2·9	250	3·2
60	110	6·5	560	7·2
80	100	5·9	490	6·3
100	150	8·8	510	6·6
120	80	4·7	410	5·3
140	80	4·7	370	4·8
160	50	2·9	380	4·9
200	20	1·2	150	1·9
220	20	1·2	170	2·2
240	30	1·8	560	7·2
Total	1,690	100·0	7,770	100·0

Adults by type and by range of income liable to tax, 1989-90

Range of weekly income (lower limit)	All adults below pensionable age		Adult men aged under 65		Adult women aged under 60		All single adults below pensionable age	
£	thousands	per cent.	thousands	per cent.	thousands	per cent.	thousands	per cent.
0	11,660	33·3	3,590	19·7	8,070	48·2	4,260	33·2
53·56	720	2·1	240	1·3	480	2·9	250	1·9
60	1,630	4·7	520	2·9	1,110	6·6	660	5·1
80	1,710	4·9	580	3·2	1,130	6·7	820	6·4
100	2,140	6·9	840	4·6	1,300	7·8	1,040	8·1
120	2,150	6·1	1,120	6·1	1,030	6·1	1,070	8·3
140	1,920	5·5	1,080	5·9	840	5·0	820	6·4

Range of weekly income (lower limit)	All adults below pensionable age		Adult men aged under 65		Adult women aged under 60		All single adults below pensionable age	
£	thousands	per cent.	thousands	per cent.	thousands	per cent.	thousands	per cent.
160	3,300	9·4	2,370	13·0	930	5·5	1,250	9·7
200	1,530	4·4	1,170	6·4	360	2·1	540	4·2
220	1,400	4·0	1,040	5·7	360	2·1	460	3·6
240	6,800	19·4	5,670	31·1	1,130	6·7	1,660	12·9
Total	34,980	100·0	18,220	100·0	16,760	100·0	12,840	100·0

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list his estimates of the numbers and percentages of *(a)* all heads of household, *(b)* single heads of household who are over pensionable age, *(c)* married heads of household who are over pensionable age, *(d)* single heads of household who are below pensionable age and *(e)* married heads of household who are below pensionable age, who have gross weekly incomes, calculated to include the incomes of other members of the same tax unit, in the following ranges: £0 to £53·56, £53·56 to £65·38, £65·38 to £80, £80 to £100, £100 to £107·12, £107·12 to £120, £120 to £130·76, £130·76 to £140, £140 to £160, £160 to £180, £180 to £200, £200 to £220, £220 to £240 and over £240;

(2) if he will list his estimates of the numbers and percentages of heads of households in the categories listed, who have gross weekly incomes calculated to include the incomes of other members of the same tax unit, in the following ranges: *(a)* all heads of households, *(b)* single heads of household who are over pensionable age, *(c)* married heads of household who are over pensionable age, *(d)* single heads of household who are below pensionable age and *(e)* married heads of household who are below pensionable age in income ranges up to £53·56, £53·56 to £65·38, £65·38 to £80, £80 to £100, £100 to £107·12, £107·12 to £120, £120 to £130·76, £130·76 to £140, £140 to £160, £160 to £180, £180 to £200, £200 to £220, £220 to £240 and over £240.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* Estimates of tax units' incomes by category of the head of household are not readily available. Estimates for 1989-90 of numbers and percentages of tax units in the specified categories by income are given in the table. The estimates are based on projections of information from the 1986 family expenditure survey and are provisional.

Tax units[1] by type and by range of income liable to tax 1989-90

Range of weekly income (lower limit)	All tax units[1]		Single persons aged over 65		Married couples aged[2]		Single persons aged less than 65		Married couples non-aged[3]	
£	thousands	percent.	thousands	percent.	thousands	percent.	thousands	percent.	thousands	percent.
0	7,810	25·0	2,310	52·5	110	4·0	4,410	33·4	980	9·0
53·36	1,400	4·5	710	16·1	20	0·7	510	3·9	160	1·5
65·38	1,440	4·6	410	9·3	480	17·7	470	3·6	100	0·9
80	1,860	6·0	290	6·6	570	21·0	860	6·5	140	1·3
100	630	2·0	50	1·1	110	4·0	390	3·0	80	0·7
107·12	1,080	3·5	80	1·8	180	6·6	670	5·1	150	1·4
120	930	3·0	100	2·3	140	5·2	530	4·0	160	1·5
130·76	850	2·7	50	1·1	110	4·0	540	4·1	140	1·3
140	1,380	4·4	90	2·1	160	5·9	840	6·4	300	2·8
160	1,240	4·0	60	1·4	80	2·9	740	5·6	350	3·2
180	1,230	3·9	60	1·4	140	5·2	530	4·0	500	4·6
200	1,190	3·8	30	0·7	100	3·7	550	4·2	510	4·7
220	1,130	3·6	10	0·2	80	2·9	460	3·5	570	5·2
240	9,030	28·9	150	3·4	440	16·2	1,690	12·8	6,750	62·0
TOTAL	31,200	100·0	4,400	100·0	2,720	100·0	13,190	100·0	10,890	100·0

[1] Single persons and married couples.
[2] At least one person aged 65 or over.
[3] Both spouses under 65.

Manufacturing (Capital Investment)

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the percentage rate of growth of capital investment in fixed assets in manufacturing industry in the United Kingdom over the decade 1979 to 1989, on the assumption that all United Kingdom firms transferred from the public to the private sector during the decade were in the private sector from before 1979; and what is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development average over the same period.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* In classifying businesses to industries no distinction is made between the public and private sectors. Within industry groups sectorial estimates which allow for classification changes are not available, for reasons of confidentiality. The information which is available was included in my earlier reply of 13 November 1989, *Official Report*, column 7.

Mortgage Tax Relief

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated cost in the present fiscal year of mortgage tax relief at the higher rate of income tax.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The estimated cost in 1989-90 of mortgage tax relief at excess over the basic rate of income tax is £430. This estimate is based on a projection of the 1986-87 survey of personal incomes and is therefore provisional.

Mr. Denzil Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the additional cost to the Exchequer, in a full year, assuming mortgage interest rates of 14·5 per cent. and at present tax rates, of increasing the mortgage interest income tax relief from a ceiling of £30,000 to a ceiling of £45,000.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The direct revenue cost in a full year, at 1989-90 levels and assuming mortgage interest rates of 14·5 per cent. throughout the year, of increasing the ceiling for mortgage interest relief from £30,000 to £45,000 is estimated to be about £900 million. This estimate makes no allowance for any consequential changes to the distribution of outstanding mortgages.

Banking and Insurance

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what areas of trade in banking and insurance business will still be subject to national controls and restrictions after the 1992 plans have been implemented.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The single market directives affecting financial services aim to open up the market within a framework based on mutual recognition and the "single passport" which will allow firms authorised in one member state to then do business throughout the Community. Banking and insurance will remain subject to national legislation, which will be modified as necessary to provide for the implementation of these directives. The scope and effect of the relevant directives are explained in the booklet "The Single Market: financial services" published by the Department of Trade and Industry in September 1989, copies of which are in the Library.

Public Expenditure

Mr. Beith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend table 1 on page 52 of the 6th report of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee, HC 217 Session 1988-89, to cover public expenditure in the years 1989-90, 1990-91 and 1991-92 where possible, on a consistent basis.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* The information needed to extend this table to cover the years up to and including 1992-93 will be published at the time of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

Mortgage Interest Relief

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of raising the ceiling on mortgage interest relief from £30,000 to £45,000; and how many households he estimates would benefit from such a change.

Mr. Peter Lilley *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* The direct revenue cost at 1989-90 levels of raising the ceiling on mortgage interest relief from £30,000 to £45,000 is estimated to be about £900 million. This estimate makes no allowance for any consequential changes to the distribution of outstanding mortgages.

The number of households with existing mortgages in excess of £30,000 is estimated to be 2·5 million.

Third World Debt

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the amount of tax forgone by the Exchequer as a result of *(a)* the decision by Lloyds bank to make provision of £1·2 billion against Third world debt and *(b)* the decision by National Westminster bank to make similar provision in the sum of £575 million.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* Tax relief due to banks in respect of loans which cannot be recovered in full is governed by the ordinary tax rules which apply to any trader who gives credit in the course of his business. The tax test is whether the principal of the debt is shown to be irrecoverable. Because of the rules of confidentiality which govern taxpayers' affairs, I am not in a position to say how far commercial provisions made by an individual bank meet the tax test.

Planning Total (DTI)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for each of the years 1978-79 to 1984-85 the planning total for the Department of Trade and Industry on a basis consistent with table 2 on page 53 of appendix 8 of the Treasury and Civil Service Committee's sixth report of Session 1988-89, HC 217.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* The information requested is not available. Figures for those elements of the new definition of the planning total for which estimates or proxies are required have not been produced for years prior to 1984-85. A departmental breakdown of central Government's own expenditure showing expenditure by the Department of Trade and Industry for the years since 1978-79 was given in table 21.4.4 of chapter 21 of the 1989 public expenditure White Paper. These figures are on the definition used for the 1988 public expenditure survey, but this is broadly unchanged in the 1989 survey, since the introduction of the new planning total has only a minimal impact on the DTI. Corresponding figures on the new basis and a breakdown of finance for the main public corporations for the years 1978-79 to 1992-93 will be given in chapter 21 of the 1990 public expenditure White Paper.

Trade Deficit

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish an analysis of the trade deficit for the most recent convenient period, identifying the imports, exports and net deficit or balance, respectively for *(a)* capital goods, *(b)* non-capital manufactured goods and *(c)* other elements.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In the third quarter of 1989 the United Kingdom visible trade deficit is provisionally estimated to be £6·8 billion on a seasonally adjusted balance of payments basis. Information about trade in capital goods is available only on an overseas trade statistics basis, as shown in the table, which tends to understate surpluses and overstate deficits.

Table 1
3rd Quarter 1989. OTS basis, seasonally adjusted

£ billion

	Exports fob	Imports cif	Crude Balance[1]
Capital Goods[2]	5·4	5·1	+0·3
Other Manufactures[3]	14·2	19·9	−5·7
Other Goods	4·2	6·7	−2·5
Total Trade	23·8	31·7	−7·9

[1] Exports fob less Imports cif.
[2] Based on the United Nations broad economic categories analysis, and including ships, North Sea oil installations and aircraft.
[3] Manufactures are defined as SITC (Rev. 3) Sections 5 to 8.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Eggs

73. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many convictions have been recorded in each year since 1985 for breaches of the rules requiring all eggs sold in shops to have been through a packing station.

Mr. Curry: This information is not held centrally.

Isle of Man

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with the Government of the Isle of Man in connection with a proposed 12-mile fishing limit around that island; what percentage of the catch of the Northern Ireland fishing industry is caught within this 12-mile limit; what are the implications for the future of the Northern Ireland fishing industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The 1987 Territorial Sea Act made provision for a 12-mile territorial sea for the Isle of Man. Fisheries and other Departments have been in discussion with the Isle of Man as to how this should be put into effect.

About 15 per cent. of Northern Ireland fishing industry's take is caught within 12 miles of the Isle of Man.

As well as ensuring the United Kingdom's responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the common fisheries policy were fully met, any arrangement made would clearly have to safeguard the interests and traditional rights of all fishermen within 12 miles of the Isle of Man.

Hunting (Forestry Commission Land)

Mr. Meale: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action has been taken following reports of an attack on a pet dog by hounds operating from Forestry Commission land on 31 October; and what precautions have been taken to prevent a further incident of this kind.

Mr. Curry: The alleged incident took place on private land adjacent to the New Forest. Investigations are being carried out by the local police, the outcome of which is awaited.

Organic Farming

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what grants and advice is available from his Department for those who were having to establish themselves as organic farmers.

Mr. Curry: I refer the hon. Member to the written reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Croydon, North-West (Mr. Malins) on 9 November 1989 at column *775*.

Hedgerows

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many miles of hedgerow have been planted within the Easington area in the last two years; and at what cost.

Mr. Curry: This information is not available in the form requested. However, in the Newcastle division, which includes the Easington areas, during the last two financial years, grant aidable expenditure of some £30,600 was incurred on the provision of hedges and ancillary facilities. This sum represents the provision of almost 10 miles of new hedgerows.

Forestry Commission (Isle of Wight)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the conservation bodies who have been consulted about the planting of Forestry Commission land on the Isle of Wight with sycamore.

Mr. Curry: Over the last 20 years, the Forestry Commission has planted about eight hectares of land on the Isle of Wight with sycamore, in mixture with other species. No conservation bodies were consulted about this planting as the land concerned was not of special conservation value.

Badgers

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 3 November, *Official Report*, column *396*, which particular snares were used; how many badgers were caught using snares; how many were killed by the snares; how many were killed by his operatives; how many were released; and whether any were lactating sow badgers.

Mr. Maclean: Swivelled free running snares were used. Three badgers were caught and all three were killed by ministry operatives. None was a lactating sow.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 3 November, *Official Report*, column *396*, if he will describe in more detail what circumstances required the use of snares in each of the eight badger investigations; and what guidelines he issues for the control and supervision of such investigations.

Mr. Maclean: In each case snares were used only when it became clear that badgers remained active on the premises following standard trapping operations. All fields men carrying out badger control operations are required to follow detailed standing instructions. When snaring fields men work in pairs and the whole operation is closely supervised by a senior officer.

Meat and Bone Meal

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 1 November, *Official Report*, column *214*, what certification accompanying meat and bone meal exported from the United Kingdom into *(a)* France, *(b)* West Germany, *(c)* Holland, *(d)* Belgium, *(e)* Italy, *(f)* Israel and *(g)* the United States of America is required by the importing country.

Mr. Maclean: The certification required is, as follows:

Belgium—specified heat treatment, hygienic packing and freedom from salmonella;

France—that the products are destined for use other than as feed for ruminants;

West Germany—application must be made to the appropriate Land authority for an import permit. This will state the particular certification which is required in each case. The Ministry is unaware that any application has been made and is not aware of any conditions which individual Laender may stipulate;

Israel—that the meal is derived from poultry.

In the absence of any requests from the trade in recent years to export meat and bonemeal derived from ruminants to Italy, the Netherlands and the United States of Americga, the ministry has not sought information about the certification which might be required. There is a small trade into the Netherlands in meal derived from poultry and the certification required relates to heat treatment.

Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his estimate of the loss to the United Kingdom livestock industry if EEC payments of hill livestock compensatory allowances were reduced to 25 per cent. in respect of the first 45 livestock units per holding, 12½ per cent. in respect of the next 45 livestock units and zero thereafter; and if he will make a statement on the current Commission proposals in these matters.

Mr. Curry: The present EC proposal is to pay the full EAGGF contribution towards hill livestock compensatory allowances, which is currently 25 per cent., on the first 45 livestock units per holding, to reduce that contribution by half over the next 45 livestock units, and to withdraw EAGGF funding altogether over 90 livestock units. We estimate that, if adopted, this proposal would reduce the United Kingdom's current receipts from the EC for HLCAs by about £10 million a year. The precise effects on the livestock industry in this country would depend on decisions still to be taken on the level of national funding. We are firmly opposed in principle to this proposal, which discriminates against farmers in our less favoured areas.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he now possesses concerning the possible vertical transmission of bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend, the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) on 13 November 1989 at column *73*.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the reasons for the delay between his announcement of a proposed ban on human consumption of bovine offal on 13 June and its implementation on 13 November.

Mr. Maclean: The ban was introduced as soon as consultations with interested parties had been undertaken in accordance with the Food Act 1984, the results assessed, and the results of further necessary scientific studies obtained.

Sugar Beet

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received concerning the sugar beet quota system; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The sugar beet quota system, and certain other aspects of the EC sugar regime, are due for a quinquennial review by 30 June 1991. My officials are consulting interested parties.

Organic Horticulture and Agriculture

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Croydon, North-West (Mr. Malins) of 9 November, *Official Report*, column *775*, what consideration he is giving in the extensification scheme to the option for organic horticulture and agriculture.

Mr. Curry: The Community rules for extensification require output on participating farms of a surplus product to be reduced by at least 20 per cent. over five years. Member states may apply this obligation by requiring participants to adopt a changed method of production, and for this purpose I am at present considering offering as an option within the future United Kingdom arrangements a switch to organic farming of some or all of the products covered by the scheme.

Nutritional Labelling

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a further statement on progress with nutritional labelling.

Mr. Maclean: I refer the hon. Member to the reply on 6 November to my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) at column *467*.

Salmon Fishing

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to promote the use of T and J nets for north-east England salmon fishing; and what corresponding restrictions he intends to place on the use of drift nets for such fishing.

Mr. Curry: We are currently in the process of considering the nature and extent of all salmon net fishing off the north-east coast of England and eastern Scotland as part of a statutory review, required under section 39 of the Salmon Act 1986.

Work on the review is underway and Ministers will submit their report to Parliament in due course.

Abattoirs

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list for each of the last 10 years, the amount of European Community money which has been used to upgrade abattoirs; how many abattoirs have received this aid; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry *[pursuant to the reply, 24 October 1989, c. 442.]:* The information is as follows:

EC regulation 355/77
Awards and payments concerning red meat abattoirs in the United Kingdom: 1978-88

Year	Awards made by commission		of which those remaining eligible to claim grant		for which actual payments made
	Number of projects	(a) amounts £	Number of projects	(b) amounts £	(c) £
1978	9	1,262,943	7	687,462	—
1979	7	1,152,203	6	1,138,650	49,178
1980	14	2,791,853	10	1,790,723	511,925
1981	9	1,721,223	8	1,687,898	710,710
1982	1,063,988	3	1,028,345	1,407,203	
1983	2	175,350	1	142,551	885,819
1984	2	392,146	2	392,146	717,845
1985	—	—	—	—	1,107,935
1986	2	679,232	2	679,232	710,065
1987	1	22,897	1	22,897	94,127
1988	1	750,000	1	750,000	558,187
Total	51	£10,011,835	41	£8,319,904	£6,752,994

Data are provided back to 1978, which was the first year of the awards under regulation EEC 355/77 (the regulation which provides for grants to help improve the marketing and processing structures of primary agricultural products).

The first column of the table shows all awards announced by the Commission to those projects in the red meat sector in the United Kingdom which wholly or partly include slaughtering. Ten of these awards were subsequently renounced by the applicants or cancelled by the Commission, either because the projects did not start, or were not in the event undertaken in accordance with the conditions laid down. The awards for projects which remained eligible to claim grant are set out in the second column.

The final column sets out the payments made by the end of 1988. Because there can be a time lag of up to four years from the date of the announcement of an award to the final payment (most beneficiaries would also claim an interim payment) there can rarely be an obvious year-by-year relationship between the amounts in the second and third columns. In addition some final claims are for sums which may be considerably less than the original award—for example, where actual costs turned out to be less than earlier forecasts.

No awards have been made to the red-meat sector in England since 1983, when the first investment programme under the scheme for this sector expired and was not renewed due to lack of foreseeable funding from the Commission. The red-meat sector has remained eligible for awards in the rest of the United Kingdom throughout the whole period.

Acid House Parties

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will initiate discussions with the National Farmers Union on procedures to prevent farming land being let for acid house parties.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* I have been asked to reply.

I will write to my hon. Friend.

North Sea Haddock

Mr. Harris: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current size of the North sea haddock quota; when he expects the quota to be exhausted; what are the tonnage allocations given to each of the organisations involved in the fishery; what are the catches for such vessels; and if he will indicate those groups whose catches have exceeded their allocations.

Mr. Curry: The United Kingdom quota for North sea haddock in 1989 is 55,271 tonnes, of which 891 tonnes was obtained in swaps with other member states during the course of the year. Allocations and latest catch information (to 4 November) are shown in the table. This shows that the following groups have fished in excess of their allocations: Scottish Fishermen's Organisation Ltd.; North East of Scotland Fishermen's Organisation Ltd.; and Fish Producers Organisation Ltd. When allowance is made for catches yet to be notified, it is clear that as a result of this overfishing the United Kingdom quota has been prematurely exhausted. Accordingly, I suspended licensed fishing on 11 November and laid an order yesterday to close the fishery to all United Kingdom vessels.

Tonnes

Group	Allocation	Catch	Difference
Scottish Fishermen's Organisation Ltd.	18,252	18,789	+1537
Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.	7,303	6,501	−802
North East of Scotland Fishermen's Organisation Ltd.	13,090	13,789	+1699
Shetland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.	2,662	2,651	−111
Fife Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.	1,140	972	−168
Anglo-Scottish Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.	5,036	4,349	−687
The Fish Producers Organisation Ltd.	879	954	+175
Non-sector	6,858	6,164	−694
10m and under boats	50	11	−39
Total United Kingdom Fleet	55,271	54,180	−1,091

+ = Overfish.
− = Underfish.
[1] In view of their catch levels, licences were withdrawn from Fish Producers Organisation Ltd. on 13 September, from Scottish Fishermen's Organisation and North East of Scotland Fishermen's Organisation Ltd. on 7 October, and from the Shetland Fish Producers Organisation Ltd. on 4 November.
[2] Catches not yet recorded are expected to be at least equal to this figure.

Cricket Bat Willow Research Group

Mr. Allen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what reports he has received from the cricket bat willow research group; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: The group has reported that a voluntary levy scheme, based on the numbers of cricket bat clefts produced, was introduced on 1 October 1989. The money raised from the levy will be used to fund research by the University of East Anglia, in close co-operation with Essex county council, into the causes and spread of watermark disease of willow.

Surveys carried out this year by Essex county council in the main cricket bat willow area show that the disease is at the lowest level on record.

HEALTH

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, in view of the findings of "We're Just in Time—AIDS, Brain Damage and Psychiatric Hospital Closures", by Charles Tannock and Caroline Collier, a copy of which has been sent to him, he will review the national strategy of closing long-stay mental hospitals.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The report "We're Just in Time —AIDS, Brain Damage and Psychiatric Hospital Closures" recommends that 2,500 beds will be required by 1995 to cater for patients with brain damage due to AIDS and that these should be provided in psychiatric hospitals formerly occupied by long-stay psychiatric patients.

I shall consider the report carefully. However, my Department is not aware of any objective research to support this recommendation. People with AIDS-related brain damage generally have other physical conditions which require extensive physical care. Others with mild dementia or neurological disorders need a range of support services, not necessarily in an institutional service. The services needed by people with HIV and AIDS are kept constantly under review.

The Government's longstanding policy is that people with mental illness should have access to all the services they need as locally as possible. Our policy relating to the development of mental health services is not aimed primarily at closing hospitals but at the provision of services to meet all the needs of mentally ill people. Health authorities closure plans concern mainly the "traditional" mental hospitals, including the Victorian asylums which, apart from their age, are generally too large or too remote to form part of a modern local service, providing treatment and care with the minimum of formality and delay. I do not consider that there is currently any reason to review this strategy.

It is for health authorities to determine the pace of rundown of these old large hospitals, but the rundown and closure of any hospital should not proceed faster than the build-up of alternative comprehensive locally based services. My Department's guidance to health authorities makes this clear.

Eye Tests

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made on the accuracy of the auto-refractor for eye tests for prescribing glasses.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: None. The Department does not rule out the possibility of a study in this area, although other eye testing techniques are available which are equally effective usually at a fraction of the cost.

Child Abuse

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set up a programme to provide social workers with more resources to treat victims of child abuse.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Taken across the country as a whole, expenditure on personal social services by local authorities has increased by 37 per cent. in real terms since 1979-80. Local authority social services departments have an important part to play, alongside other agencies, in providing counselling and support services to victims of child abuse, and it is for them to decide what resources to devote to these services in the light of local circumstances and priorities. Through the training support programme (child care), the Department has this year made available an additional £7 million for training of social services staff working in child care, with an emphasis on child protection, including the treatment of child abuse; and that initiative is to continue next year. In addition, the Department is currently funding a project based at Great Ormand Street to provide in-depth training in the treatment of child sexual abuse.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will introduce legislation to make it a statutory duty to report cases of suspected child abuse.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. As with all criminal offences there is a clear moral duty upon all citizens to report suspected child abuse. We have no evidence to suggest that, in general, people do not report child abuse when it comes to their attention.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide and make available to the public a register of voluntary groups who deal with child abuse sufferers and abusers.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A comprehensive list of such organisations is not held centrally. However, we would expect such voluntary organisations to be members of the National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations or the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, and to be known to local authority social services departments.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set up a programme to deal with the prevention of child abuse by training officials to recognise signs of abuse.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: It is the responsibility of the relevant employing agencies to determine the needs of

their employees in relation to training. However, the Department has in hand a major programme of work which is designed to promote expertise and which stimulates and complements training by local authorities, the voluntary sector and other agencies. This programme includes the training support programme (child care) and the central child abuse training initiative, funded by the Department, which includes a range of projects. Recently completed projects include the Open university child abuse and neglect training pack and the Royal Society of Medicine video training pack for doctors about child sexual abuse.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will instigate a research project to establish how many facilities to help child abusers overcome their problem are available, with their location.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to my reply on 6 November at column *451*.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set up a programme to target resources to social workers involved in child abuse cases.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: It is for individual local authorities to determine what resources to allocate to a particular service in the light of local needs and priorities. However, through the training support programme (child care) the Department has this year made available £7 million in support of total expenditure of £10 million for the training of local authority child care staff, with a particular emphasis on training in child protection.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether general practitioners are required to report suspected child abuse cases.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The General Medical Council in November 1987 expressed the view that, if a doctor has reason for believing that a child is being physically or sexually abused, not only is it permissible for the doctor to disclose information to a third party but it is a duty for the doctor to do so. That view was published in the council's annual report for 1987 and reproduced in "Working Together" (1988) and in "Diagnosis of Child Sexual Abuse: Guidance for Doctors" (1988), both of which were published by the Department and are available in the Library.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will conduct a research project on the number of emotionally abused children that have been reported in the last two years; and what type of help is provided for them.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Statistics on the number of children placed on child protection registers by reason of emotional abuse are available in "Survey of Children Placed on Child Protection Registers Year Ending 31 March 1988 England", copies of which are available in the Library. The Department has identified the need for research into the relationship between emotional abuse and neglect; and has included this issue in its strategy for possible research in 1990-91. There are a range of assessment, treatment and support services provided by local authority social services departments, health authorities and voluntary child care organisations available for abused children, including those who have been emotionally abused.

Abortion

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has about the minimal gestation age at which an aborted baby can show one or more of the following signs of life *(a)* brain activity, *(b)* pulse rate, *(c)* heart beat, *(d)* breathing and *(e)* movement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Breathing and brain activity are functions associated with viability. Although we know of no formal research on these points some doctors have noted transient heartbeat and movement from about 12 weeks' gestation.

Haemophiliacs

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department now has a clearer idea regarding the proportion of people with haemophilia with HIV who are subsequently likely to contract full-blown AIDS.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The current assessment is that 75 per cent. or more of HIV-infected haemophiliacs are likely to develop AIDS.

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State announced yesterday that the work of the whole of the National Health Service management executive is to be relocated from London to Leeds. We decided on Leeds after the most careful consideration of its advantages and those of other potential locations.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of hospital beds in *(a)* Sunderland area health authority, *(b)* Durham area health authority, and *(c)* Hartlepool area health authority, for each year from 1979 to 1989.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The latest available information is given in the table.

Average daily available beds, Hartlepool, Durham and Sunderland district health authorities, 1979 to 1987-88

	District health authority		
	Hartlepool	*Durham*	*Sunderland*
1979	592	1,192	2,426
1980	614	1,188	2,379
1981	600	1,181	2,356
1982	627	1,156	2,338
1983	636	1,165	2,351
1984	705	1,107	2,349
1985	607	1,103	2,312
1986	639	1,107	2,273
1987-88	642	1,075	2,315

Waiting Lists

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the number of people on hospital waiting lists within the Sunderland, Durham and Hartlepool health authorities at the beginning of October.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The latest available information is given in the table.

In-patient waiting list[1], Hartlepool, Durham and Sunderland district health authorities, as at 31 March 1989

District health authority	Number waiting
Hartlepool	1,167
Durham	1,425
Sunderland	4,609

[1] Less self deferred.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of patients on hospital waiting lists in the Durham, Sunderland and Hartlepool health authority areas, waiting for *(a)* varicose veins; *(b)* hip joint replacements; and *(c)* cataracts at the beginning of October.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Waiting list information is held centrally only by clinical specialty of the consultant and not by operation or diagnosis. The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairmen of the health authorities concerned for the information he seeks.

Child Neglect

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will instigate a report on the number of neglect cases and how these cases are being dealt with.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Statistics on the number of children placed on child protection registers by reason of neglect are available in "Survey of Children Placed on Child Protection Registers Year Ending 31 March 1988 England", copies of which are available in the Library. We have no plans to instigate a report on how cases of child neglect are being dealt with. However, the social services inspectorate has a programme of inspections of child protection services within individual local authorities and these reports are published.

Salmonella

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what has been the number of reported cases of salmonella poisoning in England and Wales for 1989.

Mr. Freeman: The provisional number of reported cases of salmonella in humans reported in the period January to September 1989 is 21,843. This figure was published on 30 October in the "Update on salmonella infection" produced jointly by the public health laboratory service and the state veterinary service, a copy of which is in the Library.

Attacks (Animals)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why his Department has decided not to collate the number of cases of outpatients and inpatients treated because of attacks from animals.

Mr. Freeman: The information on inpatient and day cases treated as a result of attacks by animals should be available early next year when health authorities have overcome problems in introducing the additional codes on their patient records.

The information is not collected on outpatients because there are too many outpatient attendances for such coding to be practical.

NHS Spending

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the spending on the National Health Service in England and Wales in each year from 1959 until the present *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* adjusted for retail price inflation;

(2) what was the spending on the National Health Service in England and Wales each year from 1959 until the present, adjusted for inflation in the National Health Service costs in England and Wales.

Mr. Freeman: The information requested for the years from 1974-75 to 1989-90 is shown in the table. Comparable information for the period before 1974-75 cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate costs. The retail price index is a measure of increases in cost in a basket of consumer goods and as such has no particular relevance to NHS expenditure.

NHS Gross expenditure—England and Wales *£ million*

	(a) Cash[1]	(b) RPI[2]	(c) Adjusted for NHS pay and price[3]
1974-75	3,636	13,721	16,846
1975-76	4,793	14,518	17,309
1976-77	5,466	14,364	17,484
1977-78	6,048	13,950	17,667
1978-79	6,936	14,784	18,253
1979-80	8,237	15,145	18,124
1980-81	10,723	16,953	18,578
1981-82	12,035	17,059	19,130
1982-83	13,131	17,392	19,416
1983-84	13,939	18,650	19,629
1984-85	14,965	18,036	19,881
1985-86	15,838	18,013	20,001
1986-87	17,043	18,772	20,247
1987-88	18,730	19,851	20,622
1988-89	20,833	20,833	20,833
1989-90[5]	22,575	—[4]	—[4]

[1] The gross expenditure figures shown have been produced by adding Department of Health figures for NHS expenditure in England to figures for Wales produced by the Welsh Office.
[2] Figures have been adjusted to 1988-89 prices. The RPI is constructed on a United Kingdom basis, there is no specific England and Wales RPI.
[3] No specific deflator is produced for NHS pay and price inflation in England and Wales. The cash figures have therefore been adjusted by a deflator produced by the Department of Health for England only.
[4] Estimates of retail price inflation and pay and price rises in the NHS are not produced by the Department of Health until after the financial year has ended.
[5] Estimated.

Blood Transfusion Service

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total cost of the blood transfusion service in England and Wales in each of the last three years.

Mr. Freeman: Following is information derived from the annual accounts of regional and district health authorities in England.

Information about expenditure in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Total revenue expenditure on blood transfusion services

	£ (cash)
1986-87	59,849,163
1987-88	63,787,839
[1]1988-89	68,420,036

[1] Provisional figure (as yet subject to audit).

Prescription Pricing Bureau

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total cost of the Prescription Pricing Bureau in England and Wales in each of the last three years.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The total cost of the prescription pricing authority, which covers England only, in each of the last three years was as follows:

	£ million
1986-87	20·7
1987-88	17·9
1988-89	19·3

The information relating to the Welsh pricing committee is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Public Health Laboratory

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the total cost of the public health laboratory service in each of the last three years.

Mr. Freeman: The public health laboratory service board, which is the statutory body with responsibility for running the public health laboratory service in England and Wales has received grants from the Department of Health and the Welsh Office in respect of that responsibility as follows.

£000s

Financial year	Revenue	Capital	Total
1986-87	31,083	418	31,501
1987-88	34,898	2,976	37,874
1988-89	37,629	5,013	42,642

The public health laboratory service board also receives funds from the sale of its services.

Regional Health Authorities

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the spending by each of the regional health authorities in England and Wales in each of the last three years.

Mr. Freeman: Figures of total expenditure derived from the annual accounts of regional and district health authorities in England for the years 1986-87 to 1988-89 are shown in the table.

Information about expenditure in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Total expenditure (cash)

Region	1986-87 Regional health authorities £000	1986-87 District health authorities £000	1986-87 Region total £000	1987-88 Regional health authorities £000	1987-88 District health authorities £000	1987-88 Region total £000	[1]1988-89 Regional health authorities £000	[1]1988-89 District health authorities £000	[1]1988-89 Region total £000
Northern	49,249	668,102	717,351	46,185	732,671	778,856	55,691	800,844	856,535
Yorkshire	77,299	740,791	818,089	70,463	812,399	882,862	70,801	905,679	976,480
Trent	79,660	912,306	991,966	73,401	1,011,787	1,085,188	81,274	1,133,256	1,214,530
East Anglian	28,876	393,076	421,952	27,606	434,256	461,862	29,435	491,172	520,607
North West Thames	57,877	786,447	844,324	50,360	866,914	917,274	59,999	1,003,195	1,063,194
North East Thames	72,324	979,681	1,052,005	55,687	1,086,053	1,141,740	76,422	1,223,109	1,299,531
South East Thames	59,634	873,972	933,606	63,769	956,251	1,020,020	66,668	1,064,886	1,131,554
South West Thames	60,254	643,969	704,243	103,166	710,939	814,105	110,282	800,097	910,379
Wessex	62,790	557,361	620,151	55,523	609,274	664,797	56,683	680,977	737,660
Oxford	35,391	431,957	467,346	33,377	486,034	519,411	43,945	545,075	589,020
South Western	53,070	665,359	718,429	41,357	737,832	779,189	45,207	818,652	863,859
West Midlands	106,455	1,058,838	1,164,993	106,307	1,146,550	1,252,857	82,442	1,266,708	1,349,150
Mersey	49,370	541,893	591,264	46,641	593,950	640,591	26,245	663,287	689,532
North Western	84,994	903,031	988,025	88,870	989,569	1,078,438	88,340	1,093,787	1,182,127
TOTAL	877,243	10,156,503	11,033,746	862,712	11,174,480	12,037,192	893,435	12,490,723	13,384,158

[1] Provisional figures (as yet subject to audit).

Notes:

1. The figures cover total revenue and capital expenditure on all Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS)—including hospital, community health, patient transport (ie ambulance), blood transfusion and other services.
2. Expenditure on family practitioner services (FPS) which is accounted for by family practitioner committees and cannot strictly be assigned to particular regions, is excluded.
3. The figures for regional health authorities include expenditure on services within HCHS which are directly managed by those authorities and expenditure on major capital schemes at district levels within the respective regions.
4. The annual accounts of the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals, which do not form part of the regional structure, record total expenditure on HCHS as follows:

	£000 (cash)
1986-87	219,711
1987-88	240,964
[1]1988-89	258,823

[1] Provisional figure.

Tobacco

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the future of the voluntary agreement with the tobacco industry about the advertising of tobacco products.

Mr. Freeman: The Government have told the Tobacco Advisory Council that they wish to renegotiate the current

agreement on tobacco products' advertising and promotion and health warnings. The Council has just responded on behalf of the industry that although it believes that meaningful discussions about a future voluntary agreement will be difficult until the outcome of discussions in Brussels on the draft EC directive on tobacco advertising is known, the industry is prepared to meet the Health Ministers to discuss possible renegotiations.

Social Services Committee

Mr. David Knox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, when he expects to publish the Government's response to the Social Services Committee report on the National Health Service White Paper "Working for Patients."

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Government's response was published today. It notes the large degree of agreement between the Committee and the Government both on the need for reform of the NHS and on our specific proposals for change. The Committee's clear endorsement of the fundamental aims of the White Paper "Working for Patients", namely, that the NHS will continue to be a comprehensive service open to all regardless of means and financed largely out of taxation is welcomed. We also welcome the Committee's support for many of the key proposals in the White Paper. These include the proposals for devolving more management responsibilities to the local level, extending patient choice, resource management, medical audit of the quality of care, making more efficient use of capital, increasing the number of NHS consultants and removing the "efficiency trap" by ensuring that resources are linked to workload.

The Government's response fully addresses the Committee's concerns about funding. First, it reaffirms the assurance that the necessary funding to introduce the NHS reforms will not be at the expense of patient care. We have made available an additional £82 million this year to assist with implementation. Secondly, the Committee has not recognised that spending on the NHS in the United Kingdom has increased massively—from £8 billion in 1978 to £26 billion in 1989. This represents an increase in real terms of 40 per cent. As announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the Government's spending plans mean that gross expenditure on the NHS will increase to over £28 billion in 1990-91, an increase in resources over 1989-90 of £2·6 billion. The equivalent figure for England is £23·3 billion, an increase in resources of more than £2·2 billion or 5·5 per cent. in real terms. This increase is well in excess of the Committee's recommended increase of around 2 per cent. each year. The increase will also raise the overall increase since the Government came to power in 1979 to 45 per cent. in real terms.

The Committee's other concerns are largely about the pace and process of implementation of the proposals in "Working for Patients", rather than the overall direction of change. We believe that the Committee's concerns about the availability of information systems to cost treatments and about the need for pilot projects are misplaced. Implementation of the proposals in "Working for Patients" will be an evolutionary process. Subject to parliamentary approval, the Government intend to have in place the central elements of their reforms by April 1991. These include the reshaped health authorities and FPSAs. Their chairmen and members will need to lead the implementation of the new arrangements for the NHS and their task will be very different from that of chairmen and members of the current authorities. The Government have decided therefore to follow the Committee's recommendation that non-executive members of health authorities and FPSAs should be remunerated. Other key elements will include, for example, the first NHS trusts, the first practice budgets for fund-holding GPs and the new system for contracting for services within the NHS. The subsequent development of these programmes will be informed by the experience gained from the first participating hospitals and practices.

The Government are supporting a number of projects throughout the country with the aim of developing information, financial and management systems by April 1991. The system for contracting for services will initially operate largely on the basis of existing information. At first many services are likely to be provided under "block" contracts with hospitals agreeing to provide a defined level and range of services in return for an agreed level of resources. More sophisticated forms of contracting and the associated supporting information and costing systems will develop as the experience of the NHS with contract funding grows.

Erythropoietin

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to have completed his assessment of the likely need for erythropoietin and its expenditure implications; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virgina Bottomley: I refer the right hon. Member to my reply on 6 November at column *452*.

Community Care

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he has considered whether the Association of Crossroads Care Attendant Schemes, may be able to assist local authorities to set up appropriate assessment procedures as proposed in "Community Care: Agenda for Action".

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Our proposals for assessment will be set out in our White Paper on community care which is to be published on Thursday 16 November. We plan to issue further detailed guidance to local authorities and health authorities in due course, following discussions with professional and representative bodies, including voluntary sector organisations.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, in the preparation of the White Paper on community care, he has considered the need to increase section 64 funding to voluntary organisations providing community care services.

Mr. Freeman: The increased role of the voluntary sector envisaged in our White Paper proposals is likely to lead to increased funding, using the section 64 power, in coming years. Health authorities (using section 64) and local authorities (using section 65) will determine their arrangements for care provision involving voluntary organisations and hence the levels of funding.

Mental Handicap

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes, in terms of rights, occur when a mentally handicapped person is transferred from a National Health Service hospital to a private home, supervised by a consortium; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Patients treated under contractual arrangements retain the same rights as those treated in the National Health Service and the health authority has a continuing responsibility for their medical and nursing care. The position of patients admitted to the private sector following discharge from a National Health Service hospital depends on the terms of the admission. Such patients retain the right to National Health Service general medical and dental services.

Transplant Organs

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what response he is making to the report by Dr. Sheila Gore of the Medical Research Council biostatistics unit in Cambridge relating to the shortage of organs for transplant.

Mr. Freeman: This report, which was commissioned by the Department of Health, analyses the results of an audit of deaths in intensive care units which was organised by the Department. The audit includes an examination of the number of deaths, how many were potential donors, in how many cases relatives were asked to consent to donation and how many refused.

Tomorrow I will be chairing a seminar to examine ways of improving the voluntary donation of organs to which I have invited a group of experts and interested parties. Our discussions will include the implications of the report to which the hon. Member refers.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will give for each district health authority the percentage of cases on the gross demand waiting list at March waiting for 12 months or more, and the ranking for that percentage for *(a)* general surgery, *(b)* traumatic and orthopaedic, *(c)* ear or nose and throat, *(d)* cardiothoracic surgery, *(e)* paediatric surgery, *(f)* gynaecology and *(g)* the total waiting list;

(2) if he will give for each district health authority the percentage change in the gross demand day-case total waiting list between March 1988 and March 1989 and the ranking of that percentage change;

(3) if he will give for each district health authority the sum of the gross demand total waiting lists for in-patients and day cases in March 1988, the comparable figure for March 1989, the percentage change between the two dates and the ranking of that percentage change;

(4) if he will give for each district health authority the percentage change in the in-patient waiting list between March 1988 and March 1989 and the ranking of that percentage change, using the gross demand figures for *(a)* general surgery, *(b)* traumatic and orthopaedic, *(c)* ear, nose and throat, *(d)* cardiothoracic surgery, *(e)* paediatric surgery, *(f)* gynaecology and *(g)* the total waiting list;

(5) if he will give for March 1989 and for each district health authority the notional time to clear the waiting lists, and the ranking of that notional time to clear, for *(a)* general surgery, *(b)* traumatic and orthopaedic, *(c)* ear, nose and throat, *(d)* cardiothoracic surgery, *(e)* paediatric surgery, *(f)* gynaecology and *(g)* the total waiting list;

(6) if he will give for each district health authority the March gross demand day case waiting list, and the ranking of that waiting list for *(a)* general surgery, *(b)* traumatic and orthopaedic, *(c)* ear, nose and throat, *(d)* cardiothoracic surgery, *(e)* paediatric surgery, *(f)* gynaecology and *(g)* the total waiting list;

(7) if he will give the March gross demand figures for the number of cases on the in-patient waiting lists for each district health authority for *(a)* general surgery, *(b)* traumatic and orthopaedic, *(c)* ear, nose and throat, *(d)* cardiothoracic surgery, *(e)* paediatric surgery, *(f)* gynaecology and *(g)* the total waiting list; and if he will give the ranking of each district health authority by each specialty.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 30 October 1989]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library. Reasons for the variations between districts in the number of cases on individual waiting lists include the size and age structure of the population and the extent of local development of specialised services. Not all health authorities provide each specialty.

NHS Staff

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the Ancillary Staffs Council staffing level by district for each year since 1979.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 3 November 1989]:* I refer the hon. Member to my hon. and learned Friend's reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 18 July at column *131* concerning district manpower information for 1988. Similar information covering the previous two years has already been placed in the Library.

The present structure of NHS districts has existed only since 1982. Information to this level of detail from that time up to 1985 is not available without incurring disproportionate cost.

Serotonin

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what trials are currently planned to test the drug Serotonin for the treatment of obesity, aggression, alcoholism and panic disorders.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* Any company wishing to set up clinical trails under the Medicines Act 1968 would need to apply to the Medicines Control Agency before such trials could commence. Details of any such applications are confidential to the licensing authority.

SCOTLAND

Homelessness

14. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the latest estimate of the number of homeless people in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The number of households which applied to local authorities under the

homelessness provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 is estimated to have been 25,000 in 1988-89. Of these, about 9,500 were assessed by local authorities as homeless.

19. **Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to combat homelessness in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government have taken a number of measures to ensure that housing needs in Scotland are more closely matched by housing provision. It is for local authorities to deal with cases of homelessness.

Fishing Industry

15. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next proposes to meet representatives of the Scottish fishing industry to discuss decommissioning of fishing vessels and future licensing arrangements of the industry.

Mr. Rifkind: My noble Friend the Minister of State and I meet representatives of the Scottish fishing industry on a regular basis. Our most recent meeting was on Monday 13 November when decommissioning and licensing were among the issues discussed.

25. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will make a statement about the latest progress towards long-term restructuring of the Scottish fishing industry.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend and my noble Friend the Minister of State are urgently considering proposals to help align fishing opportunity and catching capacity. These raise many difficult issues, but we hope to announce our decisions very soon.

22. **Mr. Kennedy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will assess the need for a decommissioning scheme in the Scottish fishing industry in the light of current total allowable catches; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Government are fully aware of both the present scarcity of white fish and the excess capacity which exists in the United Kingdom fishing fleet and are considering how fishing opportunity can be better aligned to catching capacity. This consideration includes the option of a decommissioning scheme. Before introducing any such scheme we would need to be satisfied that it addressed the problem appropriately and that it represented good value for taxpayers' money.

20. **Mr. Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make an official visit to Eyemouth to discuss the current state of the fishing industry.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend is considering a visit to Berwickshire when these matters might be discussed.

Alcohol Abuse

16. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to amend the Scottish Licensing Act to alleviate the problem of alcohol abuse among young persons under the age of 18 years; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend intends to introduce appropriate provisions amending the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 at the next suitable legislative opportunity.

Housing Priorities

17. **Mr. Sillars:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss central and local government co-operation in tackling Scottish housing priorities.

32. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss central and local government co-operation in tackling Scottish housing priorities.

54. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss central and local government co-operation in tackling Scottish housing priorities.

57. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to discuss central and local government co-operation in tackling Scottish housing priorities.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I met representatives of the convention on 22 September. Various housing issues were discussed.

Local Authorities (Administrative Costs)

18. **Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current average annual administrative cost per head of *(a)* regional councils, *(b)* district councils, and *(c)* island councils, in Scotland; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* the costs of running each individual council in Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: The average figures per head are:

	£
Regional Councils	859
District Councils	389
Island Councils	2,106

Total figures for each authority are as follows:

Administrative costs 1987-88

	£'000
Borders	61,381
Central	166,905
Dumfries and Galloway	93,158
Fife	229,340
Grampian	319,790
Highland	148,645
Lothian	470,412
Strathclyde	1,563,204
Tayside	255,846
Total regions	3,308,681
Orkney	34,072
Shetland	44,095
Western Isles	35,515
Total islands	113,683

	£'000
Berwickshire	3,029
Ettrick and Lauderdale	5,975
Roxburgh	8,295

	£'000
Tweeddale	2,126
Clackmannan	14,917
Falkirk	36,940
Stirling	23,931
Annandale and Eskdale	6,213
Nithsdale	11,134
Stewartry	3,725
Wigtown	7,119
Dunfermline	28,459
Kirkcaldy	40,235
North East Fife	14,318
Aberdeen City	64,822
Banff and Buchan	15,922
Gordon	9,303
Kincardine and Deeside	5,675
Moray	17,413
Badenoch and Strathspey	1,729
Caithness	4,392
Inverness	12,209
Lochaber	4,328
Nairn	1,546
Ross and Cromarty	10,489
Skye and Lochalsh	1,824
Sutherland	2,562
East Lothian	20,393
Edinburgh City	139,436
Midlothian	16,470
West Lothian	36,791
Argyll and Bute	19,817
Bearsden and Milngavie	5,126
Clydebank	18,043
Clydesdale	12,766
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	8,336
Cumnock and Doon Valley	13,200
Cunninghame	34,172
Dumbarton	21,627
East Kilbride	10,356
Eastwood	6,181
Glasgow City	386,262
Hamilton	31,321
Inverclyde	34,927
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	24,204
Kyle and Carrick	28,673
Monklands	36,724
Motherwell	53,079
Renfrew	58,784
Strathkelvin	16,824
Angus	20,222
Dundee City	59,653
Perth and Kinross	24,519
Total districts	1,496,536
Scotland	4,918,900

Scottish Development Agency

21. **Mr. Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Scottish Development Agency to discuss its programme.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no immediate plans for such a meeting, though he is in regular contact with the agency over its programmes.

65. **Mr. Ernie Ross:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chief executive of the Scottish Development Agency; and which subjects were discussed.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend met the agency board, including the chief executive, on 22 May and discussed a range of issues of mutual interest.

Lockerbie Air Crash

23. **Sir Hector Monro:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress is being made by the police with the murder inquiry following the Lockerbie air disaster; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Rifkind: My noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate, to whom Dumfries and Galloway constabulary report, is satisfied that encouraging progress has been made with the Lockerbie inquiry. This has been achieved by painstaking and meticulous detective work, remarkable forensic scientific examination and unprecedented international co-operation. While no sufficient evidence is at present available to justify the commencement of criminal proceedings in Scotland against any particular person or persons, my noble and learned Friend remains confident that further progress will be made towards the goal of bringing the perpetrators of this atrocity to justice.

Kelvin Central plc

24. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his plans for Kelvin Central plc.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State will shortly be publishing a disposal programme which will set out the basis on which the subsidiaries of the Scottish Bus Group will be sold. The first companies are expected to be advertised for sale around the end of this year. It is not, however, possible at this stage to say when Kelvin Central Buses will be offered for sale.

NHS Statistics

26. **Sir Nicholas Fairbairn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what improvements in nurse numbers, doctors' numbers and operations completed have been made in the National Health Service in Scotland since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Since this Government came to office the whole-time equivalent number of qualified nurses in the NHS in Scotland has increased by 7,000, from 26,930 to 33,932. The whole-time equivalent number of doctors has increased by 826, from 8,863 to 9,689, over the same period. The number of operations performed has increased by 177,400, from 315,500 to 492,900, an increase of 56 per cent.

Local Government Finance

27. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from Angus district council on the implementation of the community charge.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has received no such representations from Angus district council.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his Department intends to recalculate poll tax rebates, in the light of entitlement to relief under the transitional poll tax scheme.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* Relief will be calculated on the basis of

peoples' liabilities before any reduction by community charge rebate. The administrative implications of this are under discussion with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

55. **Mr Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate of the number of people in Scotland who are in arrears with their poll tax payments.

60. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how current payment levels under the community charge compare to payment levels under the old domestic rating system at a similar point in the last financial year.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Local authorities have reported good progress in the collection of the community charge with up to 96 per cent. of payers having paid in some areas. This is encouraging given that the community charge is a new tax and the number of people liable to pay is much larger than for domestic rates. It is of course difficult to draw precise comparisons with the collection of domestic rates, but it does appear that the pace at which community charge income is coming through to local authorities is broadly similar to the pace at which domestic rate income came through last year.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

29. **Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make moneys available to the appropriate authorities to research into the causes of the recent outbreak of mad cow disease.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government are currently funding extensive programmes of research into bovine spongiform encephalopathy, including studies into the epidemiology of the disease; transmission to offspring of affected animals and to other species; molecular biological and genetic aspects; clinico-pathology and embryo transfer.

The cost of the programme this year, which is being met by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, is estimated to be over £2 million and some of this work is being carried out at the neuropathogenesis unit in Edinburgh in collaboration with the Ministry's central veterinary laboratory. There is no requirement for additional moneys to be provided by Scottish Office Departments.

Electricity Boards

30. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairmen of the Scottish electricity boards; and what was discussed.

70. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met with representatives from the South of Scotland electricity board and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electricity Board; and what was discussed.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend last met the chairmen of the Scottish electricity boards on 8 November when a number of issues relating to privatisation of the industry were discussed, including the matters referred to in his statement to the House the following day.

Rents to Mortgages Scheme

31. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people will be eligible for the new rents to mortgages scheme.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Eligibility to purchase under the new rents to mortgages scheme is dependent upon a number of factors, specific to the individual concerned, details of which are not held centrally. However, from the information which is available, I estimate presently that up to 50,000 people could be eligible.

Maternity Services

33. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what future provision is planned for maternity services for people living in the east end of Glasgow for the 1990s; which hospital it is proposed that they attend; where the expert medical advisers recommended; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Greater Glasgow health board has issued a consultation document following a review of its maternity services strategy. The review involved a range of professional staff and the board stated its preferred option for the future, taking account of a range of factors, including the views of the staff, as the provision of two new units at Yorkhill and Stobhill. The board will take a final decision following the consultation period and then submit its proposals to the Secretary of State for approval. In reaching a decision as to the best provision of maternity services for the women of Glasgow my right hon. and learned Friend will carefully consider all views, including medical ones.

New Motherwell Hospital

34. **Dr. Bray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proposals he has received from the Lanarkshire health board for a new district general hospital in the Motherwell district.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: On 3 November Lanarkshire health board issued a consultative document on its acute services strategy. The options include establishing a new district general hospital in the Motherwell district. The board will not finally decide before the end of the consultation period on its preferred option, which will then be submitted to my right hon. and learned Friend for consideration.

Local Enterprise Companies

35. **Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on plans to form local enterprise companies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Groups of business people are coming forward in all parts of Scotland with the support of their local communities, and I am very encouraged by their enthusiasm. Six applications for funding to meet the costs of developing local enterprise companies have now been received, and more are in preparation.

Scottish Assembly

36. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the business community about the effects of a tax-raising Scottish assembly on Scottish industry.

52. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the business community about the effects of a tax-raising assembly on Scottish industry.

Mr. Rifkind: No such representations have been received recently. I am aware, however, of the concern expressed by top companies in Scotland that the introduction of a Scottish Assembly would inevitably result in higher taxes, which would not be to Scotland's benefit.

Economic Growth

37. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the rate of economic growth for Scotland for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Lang: The latest output—based estimates of Scotland's gross domestic product show that in 1987 the Scottish economy grew by 2·4 per cent.

Labour Statistics

38. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those constituences in Scotland where unemployment is above the British national average.

Mr. Lang: The information requested is not available since unemployment rates are not calculated for parliamentary constituencies.

Fishing and Agriculture (Employment)

39. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide projections for employment prospects in the fishing and agriculture sectors of the Scottish economy from the present time until 1999.

Mr. Lang: Projections are not made for either the agriculture or fishing sectors. Continuing the contraction which has persisted throughout the post-war period, the number of workers, excluding occupiers and spouses, employed on agricultural holdings as recorded in the main June agricultural census has fallen by about 3 per cent. per year over the past 10 years to 28,000 in 1989. Employment in sea fishing has remained broadly steady at about 8,000 over the period.

Laboratory Services

40. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy on health boards that seek to privatise laboratory services.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am not aware of any proposals to privatise laboratory services, but health boards are encouraged to strive to ensure the highest quality of services in the interests of patient care.

Health Councils

41. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has for the future of health councils.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am currently considering this carefully and hope to make an announcement once I have had an opportunity to discuss the matter with health board chairmen.

NHS Competitive Tendering

42. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement concerning competitive tendering in the National Health Service in Scotland.

56. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the progress of his plans for competitive tendering in the Health Service in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Health boards have made significant progress. By the end of October 140 contracts, largely for domestic and catering services, had been awarded and these are expected to release savings of more than £53 million over the periods of the contracts for reinvestment in direct patient care. Of the 140 contracts awarded, 110 (nearly 80 per cent.) have been won by the in-house teams. These account for more than £36 million (nearly 68 per cent.) of the savings released. The total savings released could buy over 8,400 kidney dialysis machines or pay for 18,000 hip replacement operations or about 4,750 heart by-pass operations.

61. **Mr. David Davis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what extra resources will be available as a result of competitive tendering in the Scottish Health Service over the next three to four years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The contracts awarded before the end of October are expected to release savings of more than £53 million over the periods of the contracts for reinvestment in direct patient care. These savings could buy over 8,400 kidney dialysis machines or pay for 18,000 hip replacement operations or about 4,750 heart by-pass operations.

Under-fives

43. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to improve the nursery and general child care facilities for under-fives in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Since 1979 the numbers of children under five attending local authority nursery schools or classes have increased by 28 per cent. to 41,000 and child care places have increased by 32 per cent. to 63,600.

In addition to providing revenue support grant for local authority nursery education and child care facilities, the Government assist voluntary organisations and local groups concerned with child care through the urban programme and through grants provided under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968.

Employers are showing increasing interest in providing child care facilities and the Government are strongly encouraging them to make use of available tax reliefs.

GPs' Contracts

44. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will convene a meeting with health councils in Scotland and the British Medical Association to discuss the reasons which have led his Department to impose a contract on Scottish general practitioners.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No.

Hospital Developments

45. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many major hospital developments in Scotland have been completed since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Since 1979, 63 major hospital developments costing over £1 million each have been completed providing 6,933 new hospital beds and 521 day places.

Education (Parental Views)

46. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the recent survey carried out by the Scottish Education Department into parental views on schools' education in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The survey was carried out by the MVA Consultancy and Jordanhill college of education. The main findings of the survey are summarised in the report "Talking about Schools" which was published on 16 October. A copy has been lodged in the House of Commons Library.

The survey was commissioned to support policy-making, policy evaluation and development.

The findings indicate that parents were supportive of schools; welcomed the opportunity to be involved; were in favour of testing in key subjects in primary schools; and that the vast majority of parents thought that it is a good thing to have a choice of school for their children.

The summary report should be of particular interest to school boards.

Investment

47. **Mr. Page:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on how much inward investment has been obtained for the years 1978 and 1988, or the latest available figures.

Mr. Lang: Figures prior to the establishment of Locate in Scotland in 1981, are not available.

In the year 1981-82, companies committed to 32 inward investment projects associated with the expected safeguarding or creation of 7,000 jobs and involving planned capital expenditure of £234 million.

During 1988-89, companies committed to 55 projects, associated with the expected creation and safeguarding of 7,089 jobs and involving planned capital expenditure of £437 million.

Council House Sales

48. **Mr. French:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what percentage of the total number of properties in Glasgow owned by the local authority or by Scottish Homes have been bought by their tenants.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Between April 1979 and June 1989 approximately 8·5 per cent. of the stock owned by the local authority or by Scottish Homes in Glasgow has been sold.

Tourism

49. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what is the Scottish Development Agency budget for tourist-associated development for 1990-91.

Mr. Lang: This information will not be available until after my right hon. and learned Friend has announced the agency's budget for 1990-91. I shall write to the hon. Member.

Law Centres

50. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any plans to establish new law centres in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No.

Proportional Representation

51. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received any recent representations from the campaign for a Scottish Assembly on proportional representation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No.

Ferry Services

53. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if his officials have held any recent discussions with Mr. Colin Paterson, chief executive of Caledonian MacBrayne, concerning passenger ferry services; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Regular and frequent discussions take place between officials of the Scottish Development Department and the chief executive of Caledonian MacBrayne reflecting the Government's commitment to the provision of the ferry services which are so vital to island communities.

Forth Crossing

58. **Mr. Harry Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the proposal made to him by the Forth bridge joint board regarding a second estuarial crossing.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department has been aware for some time now of the increasing volume of traffic using the existing Forth bridge. Consequently the need for a second estuarial crossing of the River Forth will be addressed in the trunk and key principal road network review study.

The commission for the study will be awarded this month and the final report will be required in 18 months time.

Health Boards (Partnerships)

59. **Mr. Michael Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if health boards in Scotland have any plans to build developments in partnership with the private sector of the kind already established in certain English health authorities.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Greater Glasgow health board has submitted proposals to provide health care for the elderly in partnership with the private sector and a number of other health boards are considering this type of partnership development.

Lowland Airports

62. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on Scottish lowland airports policy.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend is now receiving copies of responses to the consultative document on Scottish lowland airports policy issued by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. The consultation exercise ends on 29 November and submissions received will be taken fully into account in the review now in progress.

Hospices

63. **Mr. Conway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what provision his Department is making for the hospice movement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) on 14 November 1989.

School Boards

64. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will meet with the directors of education of local authorities in Scotland to discuss the progress of school boards.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend addressed the annual conference of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland on 27 October. He made it clear that we regard progress with the implementation of school boards as very satisfactory.

Forestry Taxation

66. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give a progress report on the forestry and farm woodland schemes since the changes to the forestry taxation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The forestry taxation changes were announced on 15 March 1988, the associated woodland grant scheme was opened to applications on 21 June 1988 and the farm woodland scheme was introduced on 1 October 1988.

By 30 September 1989, the Forestry Commission had received applications for entry to the woodland grant scheme which covered nearly 50,000 hectares of prospective new planting. In the first full planting season after the 1988 Budget—that is, for the year to 30 September 1989—13,468 hectares of new planting were grant-aided by the Commission, including 6,984 hectares under the woodland grant scheme.

During the year ended 30 September 1989, the farm woodland scheme attracted applications covering over 7,600 hectares of proposed planting, and grant had been paid on 1,825 hectares.

Scottish Enterprise

67. **Mr. Summerson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what response he has received from the business community in Scotland to the establishment of Scottish Enterprise.

Mr. Lang: There has been an enthusiastic and broad-based response to our proposals, which aim to integrate economic development, training and environmental renewal to form a Scottish solution to Scottish needs. To date six groups, led by senior business people, have applied for funding to meet the costs of developing local enterprise companies. The actual establishment of Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise will require legislation, for which we shall seek an early opportunity.

Scottish Farmers' Union

68. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the president of the Scottish Farmers' Union; and what they discussed.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) on 18 October at columns *129-30*.

Nurses

69. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many nurses there were in Scotland in 1979; what was their average salary; and what were the comparable figures for the most recent period.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: At April 1979 there were 65,439 nursing staff in the National Health Service in Scotland and average earnings including allowances were £67·80 per week. At April 1989 staff numbered 74,829, an increase of 9,390, and average earnings were £220·00 per week. The increase in real terms in basic pay over the period was 43 per cent.

Procurator Fiscal

71. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the Lord Advocate last met the procurator fiscal; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate last met the procurator fiscal, Edinburgh along with other senior procurators fiscal on 1 November 1989.

Enterprise Trusts

72. **Mr. Younger:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a further statement on the progress being made in setting up enterprise trusts.

Mr. Rifkind: The Government welcome the valuable contribution being made by the growing network of local enterprise trusts to the development of small businesses in Scotland. There are now 45 approved trusts operating under the aegis of Scottish Business in the Community (SCOTBIC). The "Annual Review 1988-89" recently published by SCOTBIC and the Scottish Development Agency shows that, during the period of the review, 44 trusts helped 3,900 start-up businesses and 5,700 existing businesses. The total number of jobs in the new businesses helped was 3,900 and the same number of existing jobs was supported or saved.

Oilseed Rape

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take any steps to encourage the breeding and production of varieties of oilseed rape which minimise the dispersal of pollen and other airborne material into the atmosphere.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: If it were shown conclusively that existing varieties of oilseed rape caused

serious problems for human health we would consider what measures were necessary to tackle the problem. The breeding of varieties with specific properties could be one such measure.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what conclusions his Department has reached on the results of the oilseed rape research project funded by Angus district council and Ninewells hospital on the relationship between oilseed rape crop and allergies, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what research or investigation his Department has made into the health problems connected with the oilseed rape crop; what finance has been allocated to such projects; and what plans he has to develop further the recent research financed by Angus district council and Ninewells hospital.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I received on 25 October a copy of the report of a project undertaken by Mr. Cameron, Dr. Parratt and Dr. Macfarlane-Smith. I am arranging for the report to be evaluated.

The Scottish Home and Health Department is currently considering an application for funding research relating to the alleged health problems connected with the oilseed rape crop.

Pollen from many plants, grasses and trees are known to produce allergenic symptoms and the relative importance of oilseed rape pollen as an allergen has still to be determined.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research his Department is undertaking or commissioning into developing less allergy-inducing strains of oilseed rape.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland is not engaged in, and has not so far commissioned, such research. The priority to be given to any proposals for adding work in this area to the Department's programme of commissioned research and development would depend on a number of factors, including the extent to which the claimed adverse effects of oilseed rape on human health had been confirmed.

Firework Display (Lennox Castle)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to the cost of the firework extravaganza at Lennox castle on 5 November, sponsored by the Greater Glasgow health board.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I understand from Greater Glasgow health board that an allocation was made at the beginning of the year from the board's endowment funds to improve patients' amenities at Lennox Castle hospital. Part of this allocation, £880, was used to stage a fireworks display at the hospital on Sunday 5 November. In line with the board's policy of involving the local community in the life of the hospital, members of the public were invited to attend.

Licensing Law

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received recent representations from the Scottish Licensed Trade Association about proposed changes in the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The views expressed by the Scottish Licensed Trade Association during the consultative review of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 were taken into account in the proposed changes in Scottish liquor licensing law described in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) on 19 May at c. *343-44*.

Housing

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total financial subsidy granted by the Scottish Development Agency to Barratt for its housing development at Dunedin way, West Pilton, Edinburgh; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The amount of Scottish Development Agency support for the Barratt project at Dunedin way, West Pilton, is a commercial matter between the agency and Barratt Homes Scotland and I am therefore unable to provide the hon. Member with this information.

Poisoned Birds, Islay

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Caerphilly of 1 November, *Official Report*, column *219*, on which estates or properties on Islay the illegally poisoned birds were found; and whether any prosecutions resulted.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information with regard to the location of the birds is given in the table. No prosecutions have resulted.

		Location
1979	Gyr Falcon	Islay Estates
1981	Buzzard	Ardmore Estate
1982	Golden Eagle	Islay Estates
1983	Crow	Dunlossit Estate
1986	Buzzard	Islay Estates
1987	Buzzard	Islay Estates
	Crows (5)	Islay Estates
1988	Buzzard	Foreland Estate
	Raven	Islay Estates
	Golden Eagles (2)	Islay Estates
1989	Raven	Islay Estates
	Buzzard	Islay Estates

Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow

Mr. Watson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will ask the Greater Glasgow health board to publish bacteria levels recorded from samples taken at Victoria infirmary, Glasgow.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No. This is an operational matter for Greater Glasgow health board. I understand that shortcomings in cleaning standards at the Victoria Infirmary, which were identified as a result of stringent monitoring of standards, have now been rectified.

Heart Transplant Service

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has for establishing a heart transplant service in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am currently giving this matter consideration.

NHS Expenditure

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what was the actual amount of expenditure on the National Health Service in Scotland each year from 1959 until the present *(a)* in cash and *(b)* adjusted for inflation;

(2) what was the spending on the National Health Service in Scotland each year from 1959 until the present adjusted for inflation in the National Health Service in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information is readily available only from 1974-75 and this is set out in the following table:

Total National Health Service expenditure

	(a) *£ million cash*	*(b)* *Adjusted by the GDP deflator to 1988-89 prices*
1974-75	458	1,802
1975-76	603	1,890
1976-77	685	1,895
1977-78	777	1,890
1978-79	893	1,959
1979-80	1,064	2,001
1980-81	1,343	2,130
1981-82	1,531	2,213
1982-83	1,660	2,241
1983-84	1,773	2,288
1984-85	1,901	2,337
1985-86	2,015	2,348
1986-87	2,144	2,421
1987-88	2,328	2,498
1988-89	2,571	2,571
1989-90[1]	2,815	2,668

[1] Projected outturn.

Drinking Water

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland for how long the derogations for aluminium granted under article 20 of the European Commission drinking water directive are; and in each case when they are due to expire.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Applications for delay under article 20 of the directive were made in 1985. Those still remaining and which relate to aluminium are due to expire as follows:

	Number
1990	6
1991	5
1992	11
1993	8
1994	2
1995-96	12

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the water supply areas along with the size of population they serve, in Scotland, which failed, at any time in the last 12 months, to meet the European Commission standard of 200 microgrammes per litre for aluminium and whether they are covered by a derogation under article 20 of the European Commission drinking water directive.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Available details of water supplies which may currently fail to meet the EC standard for aluminium are given in the table, which shows populations served and identifies supplies which are the subject of application for delay under article 20 of the directive. Supplies not so identified exceed the standard only occasionally.

Region and Supply	*Area served*	*Population served*
Borders		
Wanton Walls[1]	Parts of Central Borders	6,000
Alemoor[1]		20,000
Knowesdean		15,000
Central		
Longhill[1]	Falkirk	23,000
Sauchie[1]	Cowie, Plean, part Stirling	20,000
Woodburn[1]	Kirkintilloch	25,000
Blaefaulds	Falkirk, Larbert	36,000
Sunnylaw	Bridge of Allan	6,000
Dumfries and Galloway		
Areeming[1]	Springholm	2,600
New Abbey[1]	South West Nithsdale	1,600
Killylour[1]	Part Dumfries	31,000
Winterhope[1]	South East Annandale, Eskdale	6,500
Penwhirn	Wigtown District	15,700
Auchneel	Stranraer	10,000
Carsphairn	Carsphairn	200
Lochinvar	Castle Douglas, Dalbeattie	10,600
Lochfoot	ICI Drungans	—
Black Esk	West Annandale, Eskdale	25,600
Euchan	Kirkconnel, Kelloholm	4,000
Kettleton	Central Nithsdale	12,000
Wanlockhead	Wanlockhead	100
Grampian		
Herricks[1]	Keith	4,300
Rochomie[1]	Buckie	5,500
Glenlatterach	Elgin area	28,600
Newbigging	Inverurie	15,000
Turriff	REgional supply	25,000
Bogensourie	Fraserburgh	6,500
Craighead	Huntly	4,500
Glendye	North Kincardine	—
Black Hills	Lossiemouth	6,300
Mannofield	Aberdeen	62,000
Highland		
Wick[1]	Wick	8,000
Bonar Bridge	Bonar Bridge, Ardgay	1,200
Carrbridge	Carrbridge	450
Corpach	Corpach, Annat	4,650
Culrain	Culrain	90
Garve	Garve	200
Roskhill	Roskhill, Dunvegan	510
Strathnairn	Strathnairn	180
Lothian		
Fairmilehead	Part Edinburgh	225,000
Hopes	East Lothian	11,500
Pateshill	West Lothian	42,400
Rosebery	East Midlothian	54,100
Whittinghame	East Lothian	13,800

Region and Supply	*Area served*	*Population served*
Strathclyde		
Afton[1]	Cumnock and Doon Valley	39,900
Staneley[1]	Paisley area	37,000
Whinhill[1]	Greenock	17,100
Bradan[1]	Ayr, Troon, Irvine	94,300
Greenhead[1]	Irvine, Kilwinning	18,800
Muirdykes[1]	Paisley, Johnstone	60,000
Overton[1]	Gourock, Greenock	11,400
Daer	Clydesdale and Motherwell Districts	237,000
Amlaird[1]	Kilmarnock	14,600
Penwhapple[1]	Girvan area	1,100
Picketlaw	Eaglesham, Newton Mearns, etc.	13,700
Dougiehill[1]	Port Glasgow	8,300
Prospecthill[1]	Greenock	7,400
South Moorhouse[1]	Caldcoats, Newton Mearns	27,800
Aucha Lochy	Campbeltown	7,300
Crosbie[1]	West Kilbride	1,400
Ardrishaig[1]	Ardrishaig, Lochgilphead	3,780
Pundeavon[1]	Dunlop, Lugton, etc.	2,800
Cochno	Clydebank, Dalmuir	16,500
Larkfield[1]	Gourock	2,200
Spallander[1]	Kyle and Carrick	13,000
Tarbert[1]	Tarbert	1,340
Kelly[1]	Inverkip, Wemyss Bay	1,390
Torra[1]	Bowmore, Port Ellen	2,000
Tighnabruaich[1]	Tighnabruaich	800
Tobermory[1]	Tobermory	680
Dhu Loch[1]	Rothesay, Bannatyne	3,000
Inveraray[1]	Inveraray	450
Furnace[1]	Furnace	380
Port Charlotte[1]	Port Charlotte	210
Carradale[1]	Carradale	480
Muasdale[1]	Muasdale	150
Garshake[1]	Dumbarton	25,000
Clachan[1]	Clachan	150
Kaim	Bridge of Weir, Lochwinnoch	12,900
Strachur	Strachur	500
Skelmorlie[1]	Skelmorlie	1,300
Corsehouse; Camphill	Stewarton; North Ayrshire	32,000
Neilston	Neilston, Barrhead	3,600
Burncrooks	Clydebank, Bearsden	13,800
Maukinhill[1]	Greenock	5,400
Loch Eck	Kilmun Inellan	10,600
Orkney		
Kirbister	Orkney South Mainland	5,000
Wideford	Kirkwall	4,400
Bourdhouse	Orkney North Mainland	2,300
Shetland		
Aith	Aith, Clousta, Bixter	550
Burra	Burra	840
Cullivoe	North Yell	350
Quarff	Gulberwick, Quarff	360
Sandness	Sandness	200
Walls	Walls	600

[1] Supplies are the subject of applications under article 20.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the water supply areas along with the size of population they serve, in Scotland, which fail to meet the revised action limit for lead in drimking water of 50 microgrammes per litre, and those which do not appear on the Scottish Office lead identification survey which was presented to the European Commission in December 1987 and the date by which all these areas will comply with 50 microgrammes per litre standard, based on a 100 per cent. compliance with the standard.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Regulations on the quality of drinking water, to be made shortly under the Water (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended by the Water Act 1989, will specify the new standard of 50 microgrammes per litre for lead in all samples of drinking water. Information on any water supply areas which fail to meet this new standard will not be available until water authorities have undertaken the monitoring which will also be required under the regulations.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the role of his Department in ensuring that the European Commission standards for drinking water quality in Scotland are established and maintained.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The role of the Scottish Office is to set up the appropriate regulatory framework to enable directives to be applied; to ensure that appropriate resources are available; to maintain contact with the European Commission; and to provide advice and guidance on the implementation of directives.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when each water supply area which fails to meet the European Commission limit for aluminium will comply with the maximum admissible concentration laid down in the drinking water directive.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Programmes for full compliance with the aluminium standard are under discussion with water authorities. All supplies are expected to comply by early 1996.

Smoking-related Diseases

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give an estimate of the amount of staff time lost in the National Health Service in Scotland as a result of smoking-related diseases; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No information is available centrally on which such an estimate could be based.

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to take active steps to protect non-smoking employees of his Department against the effects of passive smoking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Malcolm Rifkind: The policy of my Department is currently under review. The review process has incorporated a comprehensive survey of smoking habits and attitudes of staff, conducted late in 1988.

Housing Agencies

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what engagements the Minister responsible for housing has with housing agencies before Christmas.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have frequent meetings and visits with housing agencies of various kinds, and since being appointed has visited 33 district councils to see and to discuss housing matters.

Housing Associations

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many new housing associations and co-operatives are expected to be formed over the next two years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The registration of new housing associations and co-operatives is a matter for Scottish Homes. However, I understand that Scottish Homes expects that between 20 and 40 new associations and co-operatives will be formed over the next two years. The decision to apply for registration by Scottish Homes rests with the bodies themselves and therefore precise estimates of numbers and timing of registration are not possible.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will indicate the average level of housing association grant which is intended during the current year and for 1990-91 in Scotland; and what are the highest and lowest percentages of housing association grant agreed for any developments respectively, approved to date.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No average level of housing association grant is intended. Scottish Homes has been set an increased output target in terms of the number of houses supplied per £ million of public finance (after allowing for inflation), for the current year of 15 per cent. and for 1990-91, of 17½ per cent.

The target was set in this way to allow Scottish Homes to operate the new financial regime flexibly. It can be achieved by a combination of factors including the introduction of private finance and increasing efficiency. Accordingly, I have no information of the percentages of housing association grant agreed to date.

Scottish Homes

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide a breakdown of spending allocations to the various districts of Scottish Homes in the current year.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In agreeing Scottish Homes' programme for any year, my right hon. and learned Friend considers the amount which Scottish Homes proposes be spent on particular functions, for example, in providing housing by housing associations. The allocation of funds to particular areas is then a matter for Scottish Homes.

Capital Receipts

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what level of capital receipts from sales he expects in 1990-91 from local authority, new towns and Scottish Homes stock.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Estimates of capital receipts from sales of local authority, new towns and Scottish Homes stock are taken into account in the public expenditure survey decisions which will be announced by my right hon. and learned Friend in early December.

Prestwick Airport

Mr. Lamble: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what further plans he has concerning the upgrading of transport links to Prestwick airport.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend has already announced improvements in road links to Ayrshire and these will proceed. Appraisals are also under way of various options for providing direct rail services to and from Prestwick airport.

Right to Buy

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning the action of district councils in restricting the statutory rights of council house tenants to buy their home.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Development Department receives numerous representations about the right-to-buy provisions. Some of these contain allegations that some councils are in breach of statutory requirements, for example the duty to respond to an application to purchase within two months.

I am also aware of the city of Glasgow district council's practice of requiring certain of its tenants, before their houses are improved, to sign an undertaking not to exercise their statutory right to buy, or if they do so, that they will repay to the council a proportion of the costs of the improvements. This matter was the subject of a local inquiry in June 1988 following which my right hon. and learned Friend made an order declaring the council to be in default of its statutory duties. Following an intimation by the council that it did not accept that it was in default, the Court of Session was petitioned for an order of specific performance by the council. The court's opinion was issued on 20 October, granting the petition and allowing Glasgow district council 12 weeks within which to complete the steps to remedy the default.

Nature Conservancy Council

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to place in the Library copies of the responses to his proposals relating to the Nature Conservancy Council.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* As is standard practice with consultation exercises, a public file of responses is available for inspection. The public file on the SDD consultation paper, "Scotland's Natural Heritage", is available in St. Andrew's house library, Edinburgh. The file contains all responses except those submitted in confidence. I am arranging for a copy to be placed in the House of Commons Library and shall advise the hon. Member when it is available.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Linlithgow of 8 November, what assessment he has made of *(a)* the time in man hours and *(b)* the cost of producing the breakdown of responses relating to those for and against Nature Conservancy Council proposals.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* None. I must emphasise that the Scottish Development Department's consultation paper sought views only on the proposal to create a Scottish natural heritage agency. It is not possible, nor would it be meaningful, to attempt to identify respondents' views on the question posed by the hon. Member.

Protected Birds

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will consider new measures to prevent continuing persecution of species of protected birds, with particular reference to the golden eagle.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 30 October 1989]:* The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides a comprehensive statutory framework for the protection of wild birds and their habitats, and contains additional provisions to safeguard rare and vulnerable species, including the golden eagle.

The Nature Conservancy Council is presently reviewing the effectiveness of the legislation and expects to report next year. We shall consider its report and any recommendations for change most carefully.

Building Safety

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps and what research his Department has taken to encourage safety in the Scottish building industry.

Mr. Nicholls: I have been asked to reply.

We will shortly be making the wearing of safety helmets on construction sites compulsory. The Health and Safety Commission has recently published a consultative document setting out proposals for new regulations to strengthen the management of health and safety on construction sites and the Health and Safety Executive's inspectors will be paying more attention to the quality of site management and levels of training and supervision. For the last two years we have met the HSC's requests for resources in full which has allowed real growth in their activities. For example, this includes increasing the number of HSE inspectors devoted to construction by 10 per cent. since 1988 and sponsoring research both within HSE and externally.

Each year the HSE's research and laboratory services division (RLSD) devotes resources to research into safety topics of relevance to the building industry. Information on all such projects is included in the Health and Safety Executive's programme of research and related services, a copy of which is in the House of Commons Library. In addition to sponsoring research, the HSE also provides specialist input and advice to a number of construction-related research projects.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 16 November 1989

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bananas and Sugar Cane

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make representations to the European Community Commission regarding the impact of the abolition of internal tariff barriers in 1992 on the Caribbean banana and sugar cane industries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: The European Commission is currently considering the possible arrangements for bananas post-1992, but has not yet come forward with proposals. They and member states are well aware that the United Kingdom endeavours to preserve the preferential arrangements enjoyed by our Caribbean suppliers. There are no internal tariff barriers on sugar.

Garage Tenants

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will introduce legislation to ensure that garage tenants are entitled to provide all brands of petrol for sale and to prevent petrol companies exerting any penalties or imposing conditions to prevent this; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: I have no present intention to do so. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission is investigating the supply of petrol and is due to report by 20 December. I cannot speculate on what the MMC may find, or on what decisions may be reached when its report has been considered.

Single European Act

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the United Kingdom's record with regard to implementation of the Single European Act; what is the position in the other member states; and what assessment he has made of the accuracy of Commission statistics.

Mr. Redwood: A recent Commission report dated 7 September on progress in implementing EC directives on the single market into national laws confirms that the United Kingdom's record is excellent. On the Commission's reckoning, France is the best performer, followed by the United Kingdom. Our own records show the United Kingdom performance to be even better than the Commission suggests. It says that we are behind on 11 measures—we think the figure should be only three. This means we have implemented 65 out of 68 measures as appropriate in United Kingdom law. We have passed the relevant information to the Commission. Our calculations put United Kingdom performance roughly comparable with Denmark and the Netherlands, who also claim that the Commission have underestimated their tally. I intend to continue drawing attention to the importance of full implementation in all my contacts with the Commission and my counterparts in other member states.

Blue Circle Industries

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received recently from Blue Circle Industries plc concerning competition with imports; and what reply he gave.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I am not aware of having received any such representations.

Post Office Counters

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, further to his reply of 27 July, *Official Report*, column *812*, to the hon. Member for Nuneaton (Mr. Stevens) if he will list the recommendations of the 1988 Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on Post Office Counters which have not yet been implemented; and what steps he is taking to ensure their early implementation.

Mr. Forth: Since the progress report referred to in my right hon. Friend's reply of 27 July, action on a further 14 recommendations of the 1988 Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on Post Office Counters has been completed. Recommendations which remained to be implemented at the end of October are numbers 2, 3, 6a-e, 7, 8, 10-13, 15, 17-19, 22, 24, 25, 28, 30-39, 47, 51-55, 59-62, 67, 67a, 67b, 67f, 67g, 68. We are continuing to monitor the implementation of the outstanding recommendations against the timetable agreed with the Post Office and set out in its progress reports placed in the Library in December 1988 and July 1989. As my right hon. Friend said in his reply of 27 July, a further formal report will be made in June 1991.

Origin Marking

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last discussed the issue of origin marking with the European Economic Community.

Mr. Forth: There has been contact with the EC Commission which resulted in changes, last December, to United Kingdom origin marking requirements in order to comply with our obligations under the treaty of Rome. We then undertook to explore with other member states and the EC Commission the feasibility of an EC origin marking regime for certain third country goods. My Department is considering the responses to that approach.

Libya

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total value of goods and services sold to Libya in 1988 and to the latest available month in the current year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Forth: Data on United Kingdom trade in services are not available by partner country. United Kingdom exports of goods to Libya were £236 million in 1988 and £172 million in the first nine months of 1989.

Northern Region

Ms. Quin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures and initiatives are being undertaken in the northern region to attract investment capital and industry; and if he will publish a table of capital investment in real terms showing the percentage increase this sum represents from May 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Companies in the assisted areas of the northern region with proposals for new investment can apply for regional selective assistance under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act. In addition, as part of the enterprise initiative investment grants and innovation grants (up to a maximum of £15,000 and £25,000 respectively) are available to companies employing less than 25 people.

My Department also provides financial support towards the promotional activities of the Northern Development Company; and works closely with other Government Departments, local authorities, development corporations and agencies in promoting a range of initiatives aimed at stimulating enterprise and training. These include projects promoted by the Tyne and Wear city action team, the regional task forces and the administration of the £45 million remedial package for the Sunderland area. The Department is also actively involved in the promotion of exports through services to industry provided by DTI export services.

I regret that information on capital investment in the northern region is not available in the form requested.

However, current price estimates of regional investment by selected industries and by Government are published annually in "Economic Trends"; a copy is available in the Library. The latest published figures may be found in "Economic Trends" No. 421, November 1988, pages 97 and 98. Constant price estimates are not available because there are no regional price indices.

Unsafe Goods

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times he has issued prohibition notices under section 13 of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 to prevent unsafe goods from being distributed in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Forth: The Secretary of State has twice issued prohibition notices under section 13 of the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Toys

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to ensure that toys which are being sold to the public prior to Christmas comply with the terms of the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Mr. Forth: Local authority trading standards departments have a duty to enforce the Toys (Safety) Regulations 1974 and the general safety requirement provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1987. The Act provides the necessary powers to enable them to discharge this responsibility.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Officers' Salaries

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: To ask the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed, as representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will give figures and grades, titles and ranks for all Officers of the House whose salaries are *(a)* higher and *(b)* lower than those of hon. Members, as at (i) 1 November 1989 and (ii) 1 February 1990.

Mr. Beith: The information requested is set out in the following tables. It should be noted that:

(1) The salaries quoted include the appropriate provision of London weighting including with effect from 1 January 1990, the additional point on the pay spine which is payable to staff who work in London. Grades 1 and 2 do not receive London weighting and grade 3 attracts a London allowance of £2,000 per annum (included in tables).

(2) The scales do not include the element of pay which is performance related.

(3) Where the maximum of the salary scale is greater than the basic salary of Members at 1 November 1989 and 1 January 1990 respectively, the recipient is deemed to have a higher salary than that of a Member. If the maximum of the scale is less than the basic salary of the Member, the recipient is deemed to be paid less than a Member.

(4) The statistics cover only "Officers of the House". Members of staff who are not "Officers of the House" (currently in receipt of salaries less than that of Members) are included in the list of all staff given in statement C to the 11th annual report to the House of Commons Commission, a copy of which is held in the Library.

Supplementary note: Other tables show a breakdown of the actual salaries of staff in grades with pay scales which span the salaries of Members—showing those above and below the salary of Members at the relevant dates.

Officers of the House with a salary higher than £24,107 as at 1 November 1989

		Civil Service equivalent grade	£
Speaker's Office			
2	Speaker's Counsel	3	39,600—42,900
1	Speaker's Secretary	5	31,751—35,741
1	Assistant to Speaker's Counsel	[1]7	23,797—28,041
	[1] Legal staff		
Department of the Clerk of the House			
1	Clerk of the House	1	72,000
1	Clerk Assistant	2	48,100—50,400
1	Clerk of Committees	2	48,100—50,400
7	Principal Clerk I	3	39,600—42,900
2	Principal Clerk II	4	38,568—40,004
16	Deputy Principal Clerk	5	31,751—35,741
21	Senior Clerk	7	21,939—25,825
1	Supervisor of Broadcasting	5	31,751—35,741
1	Clerk Services Sub-Committee	[2]7	20,930—24,621
	[2] 95 per cent. of grade		
Department of the Serjeant at Arms			
1	Serjeant at Arms	3	39,600—42,900
1	Deputy Serjeant at Arms	5	31,751—35,741
1	Assistant Serjeant at Arms	[2]6	23,637—30,251
2	Deputy Assistant Serjeant at Arms	7	21,939—25,825

	Civil Service equivalent grade	£
[2] 95 per cent. of grade		
Department of the Library		
1 Librarian	3	39,600—42,900
1 Deputy Librarian	4	38,568—40,004
2 Assistant Librarians	5	31,751—35,741
9 Deputy Assistant Librarians	6	24,789—31,751
12½ Senior Library Clerk	7	21,939—25,825
Vote Office		
1 Deliverer of the Vote	6	24,789—31,751
1 Deputy Deliverer of the Vote	7	21,939—25,825
Administration Department		
1 Head of Administration	3	39,600—42,900
Fees Office		
1 Accountant	4	38,568—40,004
1 Deputy Accountant	5	31,751—35,741
1 Senior Assistant Accountant	6	24,789—31,751
4 Assistant Accountant	7	21,939—25,825
Establishments Office		
1 Head of Establishments	5	31,751—35,741
1 Deputy Head of Establishments	6	24,789—31,751
Computer Office		
1 Computer Officer	5	31,751—35,741
Internal Audit		
1 Internal Auditor	7	21,939—25,825
Staff Inspection		
1 Staff Inspector	7	21,939—25,825
Department of the Official Report		
1 Editor	4	38,568—40,004
1 Deputy Editor	6	24,789—31,751
4 Principal Assistant Editors	[3]6	23,176—29,651
5 Assistant Editors	[4]6	20,872—26,651
[3] 93 per cent. of grade		
[4] 83 per cent. of grade		
Refreshment Department		
1 General Manager	6	24,789—31,751
1 Deputy General Manager	7	21,939—25,825
1 Catering Accountant	7	21,939—25,825

Officers of the House with a salary lower than £24,107 as at 1 November 1989

	Civil Service equivalent grade	£
Speaker's Office		
1 Chaplain	SEO (Max)	4,709
Department of the Clerk of the House		
6 Assistant Clerk 'A'	HEO (D)	14,722—18,086
2 Assistant Clerk 'T'	AT	11,996—13,824
Department of the Library		
6 Assistant Clerk 'A'	HEO (D)	14,772—18,086
4 Assistant Clerk 'T'	AT	11,996—13,824

1 November 1989
Supplementary breakdown for those whose scales span the Members salary but are currently paid at a lower rate

	Civil Service equivalent grade
Department of the Clerk of the House	
8 Senior Clerks	7
Department of the Serjeant at Arms	
1 Deputy Assistant Serjeant at Arms	7
Department of the Library	
10 Senior Library Clerks	7
Administration Department	
1 Assistant Accountant	7
1 Internal Auditor	7

Officers of the House with a salary higher than £26,701 as at 1 February 1990

	Civil Service equivalent grade	£
Speaker's Office		
2 Speaker's Counsel	3	39,600—42,900
1 Speaker's Secretary	5	33,026—37,186
1 Assistant to Speaker's Counsel	[1]7	24,789—29,224
[1] Legal staff		
Department of the Clerk of the House		
1 Clerk of the House	1	72,000
1 Clerk Assistant	2	48,100—50,400
1 Clerk of Committees	2	48,100—50,400
7 Principal Clerk I	3	39,600—42,900
2 Principal Clerk II	4	40,004—41,496
16 Deputy Principal Clerk	5	33,026—37,186
21 Senior Clerk	7	22,848—26,910
1 Supervisor of Broadcasting	5	33,026—37,186
Department of the Serjeant at Arms		
1 Serjeant at Arms	3	39,600—42,900
1 Deputy Serjeant at Arms	5	33,026—37,186
1 Assistant Serjeant at Arms	[2]6	24,621—31,462
2 Deputy Assistant Serjeant at Arms	7	22,848—26,910
[2] 95 per cent. of grade		
Department of the Library		
1 Librarian	3	39,600—42,900
1 Deputy Librarian	4	40,004—41,496
2 Assistant Librarians	5	33,026—37,186
9 Deputy Assistant Librarians	6	25,825—33,026
12½ Senior Library Clerk	7	22,848—26,910
(Vote Office)		
1 Deliverer of the Vote	6	25,825—33,026
1 Deputy Deliverer of the Vote	7	22,848—26,910
Administration Department		
1 Head of Administration	3	39,600—42,900
(Fees Office)		
1 Accountant	4	40,004—41,496
1 Deputy Accountant	5	33,026—37,186
1 Senior Assistant Accountant	6	25,825—33,026
4 Assistant Accountant	7	22,848—26,910
(Establishments Office)		
1 Head of Establishments	5	33,026—37,186
1 Deputy Head of Establishments	6	25,825—33,026
(Computer Office)		
1 Computer Officer	5	33,026—37,186
(Internal Audit)		
1 Internal Auditor	7	22,848—26,910
(Staff Inspection)		
1 Staff Inspector	7	22,848—26,910
Department of the Official Report		
1 Editor	4	40,004—41,496
1 Deputy Editor	6	25,825—33,026
4 Principal Assistant Editors	[3]6	24,140—30,837

		Civil Service equivalent grade	£
5	Assistant Editors [3] 93 per cent. of grade [4] 83 per cent. of grade	[4]6	21,732—27,709
Refreshment Department			
1	General Manager	6	25,825—33,026
1	Deputy General Manager	7	22,848—26,910
1	Catering Accountant	7	22,848—26,910

Officers of the House with a salary lower than £26,701 as at 1 February 1990

		Civil Service equivalent grade	£
Speaker's Office			
1	Chaplain	SEO (Max)	4,709
Department of the Clerk of the House			
1	Clerk Services Sub-Committee	[2]7	21,793—25,652
6	Assistant Clerk 'A'	HEO (D)	14,722—18,086
2	Assistant Clerk 'T' [2] 95 per cent. of grade	AT	11,996—13,824
Department of the Library			
6	Assistant Clerk 'A'	HEO (D)	14,772—18,086
4	Assistant Clerk 'T'	AT	11,996—13,824

1 February 1990
Supplementary breakdown for those whose scales span the Members salary but are currently paid at a lower rate

		Civil Service equivalent grade
Department of the Clerk of the House		
8	Senior Clerks	7
Department of the Serjeant at Arms		
1	Deputy Assistant Serjeant at Arms	7
Department of the Library		
10	Senior Library Clerks	7
Administration Department		
1	Assistant Accountant	7
1	Internal Auditor	7

European MPs

Mr. Parry: To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) what information he has as to the death in office grant of Members of Parliament of *(a)* European Economic Community countries and *(b)* Council of Europe countries at the latest available date;

(2) what information he has as to what are the typical pension rights of Members of Parliament of *(a)* European Economic Community countries and *(b)* Council of Europe countries at the latest available date, giving the contributory factors;

(3) what information he has as to what was the average salary of Members of Parliament of *(a)* European Economic Community countries and *(b)* Europe countries, at the most recent available date;

(4) what information he has on payments to Members of Parliament who retire on health grounds in the United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan;

(5) what information he has on the amount paid as a percentage of salaries by Members of Parliament in *(a)* European Economic Community countries and *(b)* Council of Europe countries towards a pension at the latest date;

(6) what information he has on the amount paid as a percentage of salaries by members of the United States of America, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and Japanese parliaments towards a pension;

(7) what information he has on the death in office grant to Members of Parliament in the United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan;

(8) what information he has on the early retirement payment to Members of Parliament in the United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan;

(9) what information he has on the level of pension on retirement on health grounds paid to Members of Parliament of *(a)* European Economic Community countries and *(b)* Council of Europe countries;

(10) what information he has on the qualifying periods for pensionable rights of Members of Parliament in the United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan;

(11) what information he has on the salaries of United States of America, Australian, Canadian, New Zealand and Japanese Members of Parliament at the latest available date;

(12) what information he has on which countries make an early retirement payment to Members of Parliament; and what such payments are.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: None. The information could be assembled only at disproportionate cost.

"Blue Peter" Appeal

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will enable hon. Members and staff of the Palace of Westminster to support the "Blue Peter" appeal for special care baby units by providing receptacles for aluminium drink cans in all refreshment areas of the House.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: No. It is considered neither appropriate nor practical for Refreshment Department facilities to be used for such purposes.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

County Courts

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General how many county courts are more than seven days behind in replying to letters.

The Attorney-General: Of the 275 county courts in England and Wales, 110 are currently taking seven days or more to reply to letters from court users. Priority is given to urgent correspondence. In the remaining 165 courts replies are currently sent within seven days.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General on how many occasions, for cases arising, respectively, in 1987, 1988 and 1989, the Lord Chancellor has paid compensation to county court users for loss occasioned as a result of the negligence of court officials; and in how many cases over the same period a claim has been made but payment refused.

The Attorney-General: The Lord Chancellor has paid compensation to county court users for loss occasioned as a result of the negligence of court officials in matters for which he is responsible, on the following number of occasions (by financial year):

	Cases
1986-87	300
1987-88	377
1988-89	359

No figures in respect of claims refused are readily available and such information can be extracted only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General what is the average interval between the lodging of a bill for taxation in Bow county court and the taxing of the bill.

The Attorney-General: The average interval between the lodging of a bill for taxation in Bow county court and the notification of the taxation to the parties is six to nine weeks in respect of civil bills and 12 weeks in respect of matrimonial bills. The length of interval is due to delays in the administrative part of the process: consultation is in hand with local solicitors to discuss ways of improving the position.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Attorney-General which class of post Wandsworth county court uses for the dispatch of letters; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: Wandsworth county court dispatches its letters by second-class post. This is in accordance with departmental practice. Certain court documents such as summonses are required by the rules governing service to be dispatched by first-class post. Chief clerks are being reminded of this requirement.

Child Abuse (Training of Judges)

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the training and retraining courses on child abuse available to Her Majesty's judges and the number of courses that have been organised in the past year.

The Attorney-General: The Judicial Studies Board organises induction and refresher courses for circuit judges, recorders and assistant recorders in both the criminal and the civil and family jurisdictions. These courses cover a wide range of topics in order to give those who attend them a comprehensive picture of sentencing and current matters of importance. In 1988 Lord Justice Butler-Sloss spoke on "Child Protection in the Law" and in 1989, on "Child Protection—The Implications of the New Legislation", during which lectures she dealt with child abuse.

The subject was also included in discussions at the annual conference for circuit judges arranged under the auspices of the president of the Family Division.

A session dealing with child abuse will be included in the course currently being prepared to meet the requirements of the Children Act.

Legal Aid

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list the names and occupations of the members of the legal aid board, together with their remuneration; and how often they have met.

The Attorney-General: The names and occupations of the members of the legal aid board are:

John Pitts (Chairman). Former Chairman and Chief Executive of the Tioxide Group.

Martin Acland, J.P., General Commissioner of Income Tax and former executive Director of Mercantile Credit Co.

Diana Beale. Advice worker and member of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Allan Blake. Head of Department of Law, Leeds Polytechnic.

Hilary Bradley. Barrister.

Lyn Devonald. Solicitor.

Kenneth Farrow. Barrister and Assistant Recorder.

Suzette Harold. Former Managing Director of F. International Ltd.

Geoffrey Hibbert, J.P. and former Personnel Director, Shell International Petroleum Co.

David Sinker. J.P., Chartered Accountant and Chairman of the Leach Group.

John Smith. J.P. and former Personnel Director and Assistant Managing Director, Associated British Ports.

Peter Soar. Solicitor.

The chairman of the board is paid £19,921 per annum and the members £13,280 for attendance on two days per week. The board was set up in a shadow capacity on 3 May 1988 and assumed full responsibility for the legal aid scheme on 1 April 1989. There have been seven meetings of the full board since 1 April 1989. The greater part of the board's work is conducted through its 11 committees and there are two or three committee meetings each week. In addition, board members undertake visits and attend meetings and conferences with representatives of the legal professions and advice agencies.

Rudolf Hess

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Attorney-General if he will direct the Director of Public Prosecutions to reconsider his decision not to initiate criminal investigations as to the circumstances surrounding the death of Rudolf Hess in Spandau prison in August 1987 in respect of *(a)* the unexplained disappearance of the flex by which the asphyxiation was reported to be caused and *(b)* the unauthorised destruction of the garden shed in which the death occurred.

The Attorney-General: No. The Director of Public Prosecutions has advised the Metropolitan police that there is no cogent evidence as the basis for further investigation. I see no justification for doing as the hon. Member asks.

PRIME MINISTER

COCOM

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Prime Minister if she will say what recent communication she has received from President Bush on the future of COCOM.

The Prime Minister: President Bush has conveyed to me his views that the streamlining of the COCOM control lists goes hand in hand with the enforcement of, and compliance with, the controls. I have made clear that I agree that we need still to guard our fundamental security interests while ensuring that the COCOM control lists deal with items which have been identified as genuinely critical.

Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Prime Minister if she will inquire into the reasons for the variations in the time taken by Government Departments to reply to correspondence from hon. Members; if she will take steps to raise the performance of all Departments to that of the best; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: It is for each Department to decide how it responds to correspondence from hon. Members. However, Departments ensure that a reply is sent as soon as possible.

Golden Handshakes

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Prime Minister what is Government policy towards golden handshakes for departing chairmen of publicly owned companies; and how much public money has been spent in the last 10 years on this or related purposes.

The Prime Minister: Ministers may determine the compensation which may be paid to chairmen and others of boards of nationalised industries and other public boards and corporations when their appointments end prematurely in circumstances which make it right that the person concerned should receive compensation. The normal practice is that the assessment of compensation follows broadly the approach of a court of law in assessing damages for a breach of contract. Records are not kept centrally on the amount of compensation which has been paid to chairmen and members of public boards over the last 10 years.

Golden Shares

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Prime Minister whether Government policy as to the use of what are known as golden shares is determined by the Minister in whom that share is legally vested, in each case.

The Prime Minister: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Schools (Ballots)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many ballots in United Kingdom secondary schools on change of status to date have excluded parents of first-year pupils from voting.

Mrs. Rumbold: Ballots on grant-maintained status for schools in England and Wales are governed by section 61 of the Education Reform Act 1988. This provides that all parents who are known to the governing body as parents of registered pupils at the school, and were named as parents of such pupils on the school register 14 days after the date when ballot was called (by the presentation of a parental petition or resolution of the governing body) are entitled to vote. This would normally include all parents of registered pupils at the school, including the parents of first-year pupils, at the time that the ballot was called. Rarely, where a ballot is called near the end of an academic year but is not held until the following year, this may differ from the register of parents at the school when the ballot is held.

Disabled Students (Allowance)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list, authority by authority, the total amount spent on the disabled student allowance.

Mr. Jackson: The information for the latest available year, 1987-88, is as follows. Local education authorities which awarded no disabled student allowances have been excluded from the table.

Mandatory Awards: Disabled student allowance: 1987-88

	Number of students	Amount awarded[1]
London Boroughs		
Barnet	3	2,100
Bexley	2	1,400
Bromley	2	420
Croydon	2	980
Ealing	1	461
Havering	2	701
Hillingdon	1	700
Hounslow	2	544
Newham	2	869
Richmond-upon-Thames	3	1,394
Sutton	2	1,400
Waltham Forest	1	700
ILEA	17	10,325
Metropolitan Districts		
Birmingham	4	1,582
Coventry	2	700
Dudley	6	2,475
Sandwell	2	1,029
Wolverhampton	1	455
Liverpool	6	3,497
St. Helens	1	44
Sefton	6	1,706
Wirral	5	1,607
Bolton	2	425
Bury	4	2,295
Manchester	6	3,652
Rochdale	1	700
Salford	3	1,550
Stockport	1	700
Tameside	2	1,394
Wigan	1	700
Barnsley	1	545
Doncaster	4	734
Rotherham	2	663
Sheffield	8	2,986
Bradford	1	286
Calderdale	1	700
Kirklees	1	700
Leeds	8	3,890
Newcastle upon Tyne	1	700
South Tyneside	3	2,100
Sunderland	2	335
Shire Counties		
Avon	4	1,270
Berkshire	11	3,398
Buckinghamshire	4	1,635
Cambridgeshire	6	1,748
Cheshire	7	2,780
Cleveland	4	1,261
Cornwall	1	700
Cumbria	2	791
Derbyshire	10	4,200
Devon	9	3,860
Dorset	8	2,379
Durham	4	860
East Sussex	8	2,590
Gloucestershire	4	1,339
Hampshire	25	16,823
Hereford and Worcester	10	4,696

	Number of students	Amount awarded[1]
Hertfordshire	12	3,874
Humberside	1	491
Isle of Wight	1	450
Kent	12	3,930
Lancashire	13	5,625
Norfolk	4	1,125
North Yorkshire	9	3,185
Northamptonshire	2	560
Nottinghamshire	7	4,202
Oxfordshire	5	3,200
Shropshire	1	407
Staffordshire	6	1,050
Suffolk	4	1,055
Surrey	4	972
West Sussex	2	239
Wiltshire	12	4,588
Wales		
Clwyd	5	2,956
Dyfed	4	2,800
Gwent	5	1,700
Gwynedd	3	1,700
Mid-Glamorgan	5	1,443
West Glamorgan	4	1,560
England and Wales	363	157,586

[1] For disabled students allowances.

Departmental Documents (Maintained Schools)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will tabulate in the *Official Report* the reference numbers and titles of all statutory instruments, departmental circulars, and other documents distributed by him direct to head teachers and governors of maintained schools consequential to the provisions of the Education Act 1988, indicating for each what action or return respectively is required; and what further documents in these categories and for which purposes he proposes to circulate prior to 1 September 1990.

Mrs. Rumbold: Information is not available in the precise form requested.

Following are those statutory instruments, circulars and other documents that have been distributed since 2 January 1989.

To identify those that were distributed directly to headteachers and governors of maintained schools would involve disproportionate cost.

Statutory Instruments

The Education Reform Act 1988 (Commencement No. 1) Order 1988 S.I. 1988/1459 c.55.

The Education Reform Act 1988 (Commencement No. 2) Order 1988 S.I. 1988/1794 c.63.

The Education Reform Act 1988 (Commencement No. 3) Order 1988 S.I. 1988/2002 c.73.

The Education (Higher Education Corporations) (No. 4) Order 1988 S.I. 1988/2283.

The Education (Higher Education Corporations) (No. 5) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/17.

The Education (Inner London Education Authority) (Transitional and Supplementary Provisions) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/46.

The Education Reform Act 1988 (Commencement No. 5) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/164 c.5.

The Secondary Examinations Council (Designation of Staff) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/176.

The Education (Designated Institutions) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/282.

The Education (Prescribed Courses of Higher Education) (England) Regulations 1989 S.I. 1989/302.

The Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in Mathematics) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/308.

The Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in Science) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/309.

The Education (Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations 1989 S.I. 1989/329.

The Education (Schools and Further and Higher) Regulations 1989 S.I. 1989/351.

The Education (Higher Education Corporations) (Designated Staff) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/369.

The Education (Pre-Scheme Financial Statements) Regulations 1989 S.I. 1989/370.

The Education (Prescribed Public Examinations) Regulations 1989 S.I. 1989/377.

The Education (Schools Hours & Policies) (Information) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/398.

The Education (Bulmershe College of Higher Education Higher Education Corporation) (Dissolution) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/408.

The Education (West Midlands College of Higher Education Higher Education Corporation) (Dissolution) Order 1989.

The Education (Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology Higher Education Corporation) (Dissolution) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/410.

The Education (Listed Bodies) (Amendment) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/597.

The Education (Recognised Awards) (Amendment) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/598.

The Education Reform Act 1988 (Commencement No. 7) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/710 c.20.

The Education (National Curriculum) (Modern Foreign Languages) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/825.

The Education (Modification of Enactments Relating to Employment) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/901.

The Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in English) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/907.

The Education (School Curriculum and Related Information) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/954.

The Education (Inner London Education Authority) (Continuity and Offers of Employment) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1040.

The Education (Inner London Education Authority) (Transitional and Supplementary Provisions (No. 2) Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1135.

The Education (School Curriculum and Related Information) (Amendment) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1136.

The Education (National Curriculum) (Temporary Exceptions for Individual Pupils) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1181.

The Education (School Records) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1261.

The Education (Inner London Education Authority) Schools Designation Order 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1280.

The Education (Grant Maintained Schools) (Finance) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1287.

The Education (Pre-Scheme Financial Statements) (Amendment) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1288.

The Education (Teachers) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1319.

The Education (Financial Delegation to Schools) (Mandatory Exceptions) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1352.

The Education (Further and Higher Education Funding Schemes) (Publication and Information) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1452.

The Education (Adult Education Centres Funding Schemes) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1468.

The Education (Grant Maintained Schools) (Publication of Proposals) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1469.

The Education (Proposed Further and Higher Education Institutions) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1470.

The Education (Teachers) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1989 S.I. No. 1989/1541.

The Education (Designated Institutions) (Amendment) Order 1989 S.I. 1989/2055.

Chronological list of des circulars

1/89	9 January	Education Reform Act 88: Local arrangements for the consideration of school complaints.
2/89	12 January	Education Reform Act 88: Charges for school activities.
3/89	20 January	Education Reform Act 88: Religious education and collective worship.
5/89	22 February	Education Reform Act 88: The school curriculum and assessment.
6/89	7 March	Education Reform Act 88: National Curriculum: Mathematics and Science orders under section 4.
7/89	22 March	Teachers (Compensation for redundancy and premature retirement regulations 1989.
9/89	19 May	Education Reform Act 88: Modern foreign languages in the national curriculum.
10/89	31 May	Education Reform Act 88: English in the National Curriculum Key Stage One: order under section 4.
11/89	31 May	Education Reform Act 88: Statutory approval of qualification under section 5. [Annex 3 revised on 31st July].
13/89	9 June	Local management of schools and further and higher education colleges: order under section 222 of Education Reform Act 88.
14/89	12 June	Education (school curriculum and related information) regulations 1989.
15/89	11 July	National Curriculum: temporary exceptions from the National Curriculum.
18/89	16 August	The Education (Teachers) Regulations 1989.
19/89	19 August	Adult continuing education and the Education Reform Act 1988: Planning and delegation Schemes.
21/89	23 August	Grant-maintained schools: Financial Arrangements.
22/89	29 September	Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs: Procedures within the Education, Health and Social Services.
23/89	8 November	Special schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Other documents

Statutory Approval of Qualifictions: Draft Circular.
The Education (School Curriculum and Related Information) Regulations 1989: Draft Circular.
Education Reform Act 1988: Opportunity, Information, Action: The Replan guide to the Education Reform Act for People working with unwaged adults.
ERA: A Bulletin for School Teachers and Governors: Spring 1989: Issue 2.
National Curriculum: From Policy into Practice.
Grant Maintained Schools: Financial Arrangements: Consultation Paper.
Length and Control of School Sessions: Draft Circular.
Education (Teachers) Regulations 1989: Draft Circular.
LMS [Local Management of Schools]: Draft Regulations on Mandatory Exceptions.
ERA: A Bulletin for Schools Teachers and Governors: Summer 1989 Issue 3.
Recognised Degree Courses in the United Kingdom.
National Curriculum: Draft Key stage 1 order for English.
Guide for College Governors.
National Curriculum History Working Group: Interim Report
National Curiculum: Draft Orders for Mathematics and Science
Mathematics in the National Curriculum.
Science in the National Curriculum.
Mathematics in the National Curriculum: Amendment pages.
National Curriculum: Temporary Exemptions for Individual Pupils Draft Regulations and Circular.
English in the National Curriculum.
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents.
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Bengali].
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Chinese].
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Greek].
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Gujerati].
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Hindi].
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Panjabi].
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Turkish].
National Curriculum: A Guide for Parents [In Urdu].
Tomorrow's schools: A Guide for Parents.
Grant Maintained Schools: Model Instruments and Articles of Government.
Guide to the Law for Grant Maintained School Governors.
School Governors: How to become a Grant Maintained School.

Middle School Systems

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which English local education authorities operate a middle school system; how many middle schools there are; and which of these are for ages nine to 13 years.

Mr. Alan Howarth: The information requested as at January 1989 is given in the following table.

Local Education Authorities operating a Middle School System January 1989

	Total schools	*9-13 Schools*
Ealing	31	—
Harrow	18	—
Merton	14	14
Birmingham	14	—
Dudley	3	—
Rochdale	9	—
Barnsley	2	1
Doncaster	40	17
Sheffield	38	—
Bradford	63	59
Kirklees	11	8
Leeds	64	60
Wakefield	28	19
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	9	9
North Tyneside	15	15
Bedfordshire	43	43
Berkshire	14	4
Buckinghamshire	67	—
Cambridgeshire	1	1
Devon	15	5
Dorset	26	18
East Sussex	1	—
Hampshire	74	—
Hereford and Worcester	39	30
Hertfordshire	9	9
Humberside	23	4
Isle of Wight	16	16
Kent	10	10
Leicestershire	9	—
Norfolk	59	—
North Yorkshire	2	—
Northamptonshire	23	23
Northumberland	45	45
Nottinghamshire	8	8
Oxfordshire	12	12
Shropshire	3	3
Somerset	9	9
Staffordshire	14	14
Suffolk	39	39
Surrey	104	—
Warwickshire	56	—
West Sussex	28	2
Wiltshire	5	5
ENGLAND	1,113	502

Genetic Research

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement further to his statement at the Royal Society on 14 November that lay people have a role to play in genetic research.

Mr. Jackson: My right hon. Friend referred, in his address at the Royal Society, to the fundamental ethical issues raised by genetic research. He commented that this is an area where lay people as well as scientists, theologians, philosophers and politicians have an important role to play in bringing the benefit of a varied and balanced range of views.

Marine Science

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on the remarks in his statement to the Royal Society on 14 November concerning those aspects of marine science which are best addressed on an international co-operative basis.

Mr. Jackson: As my right hon. Friend told the Royal Society seminar, one objective in developing international scientific collaboration is to undertake research and development projects whose size or complexity make them impossible for one nation alone. Aspects of marine science that fit this criterion include the study of ocean circulation to improve understanding of how the oceans affect the Earth's climate; the study of global marine processes such as biogeochemical ocean fluxes and air-sea interactions, also critical to understanding the role of the oceans in determining climate; and studies of the North sea, including the development of water quality models.

Teachers (Modern Languages)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is his estimate of the shortage of teachers of modern languages in schools prior to 1992.

Mr. Alan Howarth: This information is not available in the form requested. We project an overall shortage of about 1,000 modern languages teachers in 1995, with similar shortages in intervening years.

Education Reform

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science by how much he expects the budgets of opted-out schools to increase.

Mrs. Rumbold: Funding for a grant-maintained school is calculated according to what its former maintaining local education authority would have spent on the school. This includes a per pupil share of the LEA's indirect spending on schools in the form of centrally-provided services. That share varies from one school and LEA to another but to date has been equal on average to about 15 per cent. of LEA's direct spending on schools.

Pre-development Research

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what proposals he has for pre-development research.

Mr. Jackson: My Department's main activity in the field of pre-development research—collaborative pre-competitive research involving the science base and industry—is through the research councils' participation in the Government's LINK initiative. There are currently 21 approved programmes, representing a total Government commitment of some £150 million, of which the research councils are contributing just over one third.

Student Loans

Mr. Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the administration of student loans.

Mr. John MacGregor: Agreement has been reached between the Government and a number of financial institutions on the next steps in preparatory work for the student loans scheme.

A company, Student Loans Company Limited, is being formed. The company will be wholly owned by Barclays Bank plc, Midland Bank plc, National Westminster Bank plc, The Royal Bank of Scotland plc, TSB Bank plc, Girobank plc, Allied Irish Banks plc, Bank of Ireland, Northern Bank Limited and Ulster Bank Limited. I am placing a copy of the memorandum of understanding, which has been signed by the participating financial institutions, in the Library of the House. Additional financial institutions will be invited to become shareholders in Student Loans Company Limited when a brochure is issued.

Contracts will be placed by the Government with Student Loans Company Limited for preparatory work on the students loans scheme, the cost of which in 1989-90 will be met by estimates already approved by Parliament. The company's first task will be to sign a contract for the central loans processing system. Contractual negotiations are already in hand.

Subject to the passage of the necessary legislation and to final agreement being reached between the Government and the financial institutions, the Government intend to enter into a contract with the company for the administration of the scheme itself. As indicated in my predecessor's oral statement on 19 June at columns 21-22, the Government will fund the company for the administrative costs of the scheme and for the loans themselves and will pay a transaction fee of £12 per student loan application per year in return for the costs incurred at the branches of the financial institutions where certificates of entitlement are presented. The Government and the participating financial institutions agree that this fee represents a reasonable return for the work involved. The loans will be available to all eligible higher education students without reference to their credit rating.

I am also placing in the Library of the House a copy of the report prepared by Price Waterhouse on state 2 of preparatory work on the student loans scheme, in fulfilment of the undertaking given to the hon. Member for Blackburn in my written answer of 17 October, at col. 89.

Student Income and Expenditure (Survey)

Mr. Conchman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when the results of the recent survey of student income and expenditure conducted by Research Services Ltd. will be published.

Mr. Jackson: I understand that Research Services Limited will be publishing the survey report today. I shall place copies in the Library.

Examinations (Attainment)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish tables for each local education authority for England, giving the average level of attainment of pupils in public examinations for the latest available date, adjusted to take account of the socio-economic background of pupils in each area in a manner similar to that used by his Department in its statistical bulletins, and the ranking of local education authorities when data are adjusted in this way, and when unadjusted.

Mr. MacGregor *[holding answer 9 November 1989]:* I will write to the hon. Member.

Statemented Children

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will publish a table showing, for local education authorities in England in each of the last three years for which records exist *(a)* how many children and what proportion of children of school age have been statemented as having special educational needs and *(b)* what extra resources in terms of teacher hours per statemented pupil per year have been made available by each local education authority in England respectively.

Mr. Alan Howarth *[pursuant to the reply, 31 October, c. 113]:* The number of children with statements of special educational needs in maintained schools and these children as a percentage of all pupils in maintained schools for whom each local education authority is responsible in England in 1986, 1987 and 1988 is given in the following table.

Number of children with statements in maintained schools

January of each year	*Pupils with statements*			*As a percentage of all pupils in maintained schools*		
	1986	*1987*	*1988*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
Barking	300	294	276	1·3	1·3	1·2
Barnet	519	514	508	1·3	1·3	1·4
Bexley	592	631	639	1·8	1·9	2·0
Brent	[1]	401	423	[1]	1·1	1·1
Bromley	666	618	766	1·7	1·7	2·1
Croydon	760	823	999	1·7	1·9	2·4
Ealing	558	579	541	1·4	1·5	1·4
Enfield	657	629	577	1·7	1·6	1·5
Haringey	405	372	358	1·4	1·4	1·3
Harrow	408	398	451	1·5	1·5	1·7
Havering	560	537	537	1·5	1·5	1·5
Hillingdon	488	475	514	1·4	1·4	1·6
Hounslow	391	610	684	1·3	2·0	2·3
Kingston upon Thames	283	296	283	1·6	1·7	1·7
Merton	52	149	248	0·2	0·7	1·2
Newham	680	698	693	1·8	1·9	2·0
Redbridge	537	534	512	1·7	1·7	1·7
Richmond upon Thames	253	265	281	1·6	1·7	1·8
Sutton	218	455	413	1·0	2·0	1·9
Waltham Forest	700	675	475	2·1	2·1	1·5
Inner London	6,665	6,961	6,817	2·4	2·6	2·5
Birmingham	3,402	3,470	3,533	2·0	2·0	2·1
Coventry	981	983	947	2·0	2·0	2·0
Dudley	852	814	826	1·8	1·7	1·8
Sandwell	1,050	1,043	1,042	2·0	2·0	2·1
Solihull	120	182	245	0·3	0·5	0·7
Walsall	708	713	715	1·5	1·5	1·6
Wolverhampton	727	667	719	1·6	1·6	1·7
Knowsley	340	486	596	1·1	1·6	2·0
Liverpool	1,606	1,638	1,638	2·0	2·1	2·1
St. Helens	528	518	409	1·6	1·6	1·3
Sefton	535	607	648	1·1	1·3	1·4
Wirral	951	922	714	1·8	1·7	1·4
Bolton	543	521	533	1·2	1·2	1·2
Bury	474	470	531	1·7	1·7	2·0
Manchester	222	420	690	0·3	0·6	1·0
Oldham	651	577	517	1·7	1·5	1·4
Rochdale	642	658	654	1·7	1·8	1·8
Salford	723	636	525	1·9	1·7	1·5
Stockport	666	676	795	1·5	1·5	1·8
Tameside	735	626	676	2·0	1·7	1·9
Trafford	389	531	545	1·3	1·8	1·8
Wigan	198	255	418	0·4	0·5	0·8
Barnsley	422	432	406	1·1	1·2	1·1
Doncaster	115	766	808	0·2	1·5	1·6
Rotherham	792	809	833	1·8	1·8	2·0
Sheffield	1,341	1,292	1,254	1·7	1·7	1·7
Bradford	1,338	1,265	1,231	1·6	1·5	1·5
Calderdale	316	334	350	0·9	1·0	1·1
Kirklees	953	940	1,119	1·4	1·5	1·8
Leeds	1,482	2,017	1,836	1·3	1·8	1·7
Wakefield	863	807	783	1·7	1·6	1·6

January of each year	Pupils with statements 1986	1987	1988	As a percentage of all pupils in maintained schools 1986	1987	1988
Gateshead	569	568	483	1·7	1·8	1·6
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	793	785	770	2·0	2·0	2·0
North Tyneside	538	553	601	1·7	1·7	1·9
South Tyneside	378	411	457	1·5	1·7	1·9
Sunderland	926	893	825	1·8	1·7	1·7
Isles of Scilly	1	0	0	0·3	0·0	0·0
Avon	6,208	3,394	3,321	4·6	2·5	2·5
Bedfordshire	1,376	1,311	1,385	1·6	1·6	1·7
Berkshire	1,964	1,921	1,686	1·8	1·8	1·6
Buckinghamshire	2,462	2,429	2,441	2·5	2·4	2·5
Cambridgeshire	1,796	1,149	1,554	1·8	1·2	1·6
Cheshire	3,149	2,979	3,048	2·0	1·9	2·0
Cleveland	2,189	2,140	2,218	2·1	2·1	2·2
Cornwall	1,038	1,227	1,316	1·5	1·8	1·9
Cumbria	1,157	1,236	1,411	1·5	1·6	1·9
Derbyshire	2,664	3,002	2,824	1·8	2·1	2·0
Devon	2,447	2,609	2,821	1·8	2·0	2·1
Dorset	1,450	1,614	1,705	1·8	2·1	2·1
Durham	1,479	1,335	1,528	1·5	1·4	1·6
East Sussex	1,431	1,439	1,493	1·7	1·7	1·8
Essex	3,962	3,813	4,057	1·7	1·6	1·8
Gloucestershire	203	614	534	0·3	0·8	0·7
Hampshire	4,229	4,041	4,264	1·9	1·9	2·0
Hereford and Worcester	33	95	191	0·03	0·1	0·2
Hertfordshire	3,088	3,182	3,636	2·0	2·1	2·5
Humberside	2,205	2,088	1,962	1·5	1·5	1·4
Isle of Wight	298	288	309	1·7	1·7	1·8
Kent	4,123	3,838	4,264	1·8	1·7	1·9
Lancashire	3,441	3,481	3,361	1·6	1·6	1·6
Leicestershire	1,632	1,637	1,748	1·1	1·2	1·3
Lincolnshire	1,715	1,708	1,770	2·0	2·0	2·1
Norfolk	1,567	1,790	1,937	1·5	1·7	1·9
North Yorkshire	1,535	1,546	1,446	1·5	1·5	1·5
Northamptonshire	1,646	1,521	1,236	1·7	1·6	1·3
Northumberland	816	829	817	1·6	1·7	1·7
Nottinghamshire	2,267	2,159	2,085	1·4	1·4	1·4
Oxfordshire	847	779	728	1·1	1·1	1·0
Shropshire	1,063	1,093	1,238	1·7	1·7	2·0
Somerset	1,200	1,413	1,702	1·8	2·2	2·7
Staffordshire	2,411	2,636	2,558	1·4	1·6	1·6
Suffolk	1,380	1,405	1,577	1·5	1·6	1·8
Surrey	2,719	2,791	3,002	2·1	2·2	2·4
Warwickshire	1,471	1,408	1,545	1·9	1·9	2·1
West Sussex	1,112	1,121	1,151	1·2	1·2	1·3
Wiltshire	1,596	1,645	1,845	2·0	2·0	2·3
England	120,931	120,905	124,381	1·7	1·7	1·8

[1]A Nil Return was received from Brent Lea in 1986.

TRANSPORT

Stolen Cars (Accidents)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many persons have been killed in accidents involving police cars while driving stolen cars on Merseyside in the last five years.

Mr. Atkins: The information requested is not collected on the STATS19 accident report form.

Air Controllers

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will meet the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority to discuss ways of improving the workload of air controllers at Heathrow and Gatwick airports.

Mr. McLoughlin: No. This is a matter for the Civil Aviation Authority and management of the National Air Traffic Services.

Airports (Security)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) under what statutory authority security companies operate at British airports;

(2) what guidance he issues on the criteria to be used in recruiting security firms at British airports.

Mr. McLoughlin: Security companies offer a wide range of services. The arrangements under which they perform those services are a matter between themselves and their clients. The fact that some of the tasks they are engaged to carry out may be performed wholly or partly at airports does not make those arrangements in general a matter for my right hon. Friend. However, under directions made by the Secretary of State under the Aviation Security Act 1982 airport managers and aircraft operators have various obligations in relation to aviation security. They may use their employees or agents to fulfil these obligations. It is a requirement of current directions that any security companies engaged for this purpose must be members of the British Security Industry Association or the International Professional Security Association. The

Government will be responding in due course to the points made about this requirement by the Transport Select Committee in paragraph 56 of its recent report on airport security.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what further steps he is taking to improve security at British airports; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: We are determined to improve aviation security. The very full answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Wealden (Sir G. Johnson Smith) by my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West (Mr. Channon), the then Secretary of State, on 24 April at columns *448-50*, announced a range of new initiatives. These are being followed through vigorously, and we shall not hesitate to take any further steps which may be necessary.

Underground Stations

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the number of London Underground stations north of the River Thames and the number south of the River Thames; and what plans are there to bring underground lines south of the river.

Mr. Portillo: There are 244 London Underground stations north of the River Thames and 29 south of the river. We are considering the extension of the Jubilee line via the south bank of the river to Canary wharf. An announcement on this will be made shortly.

East London Rail Study

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the full report of the east London rail study; and when his Department will make the report publicly available.

Mr. Portillo: Halcrow Fox and Associates have prepared a fuller report on the east London rail study setting out the work which lay behind their summary report published in July. I have placed copies in the Library.

Road Congestion

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department estimates for the budgets in terms of relief of road congestion in south and east London of the proposed new extension to the Jubilee line.

Mr. Portillo: This information is commercially confidential as it has a bearing on the negotiations with developers on their contributions to the Jubilee extension.

Thames Riverbus

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the Thames riverbus partnership following the six months of operation of the partnership.

Mr. Portillo: I have received periodic reports from the Riverbus partnership.

Underground Extensions

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations his Department has received from local authorities and others in support of proposals for underground line extensions in *(a)* Southwark and *(b)* docklands.

Mr. Portillo: The Department has received a number of representations in support of proposals for extensions of the underground in Southwark and docklands.

Jubilee Line

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the expected number of travellers on the proposed extension to the Jubilee Line *(a)* from Docklands westwards and *(b)* from west to Docklands in each of the first 10 years of operation.

Mr. Portillo: Forecasts have been made only for the morning peak three-hour period in 2001. The number of passengers predicted to use the line varies from link to link along its length. Between Green Park and Canary Wharf the number of people travelling daily eastward in the morning peak period is forecast to vary between 17,000 and 30,300 and the number travelling westward between 8,000 and 32,100.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he has information on the proposed extension of the Jubilee line to Greenwich; if his Department is proposing to fund this extension; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what information he has on the extension of the Jubilee line into the London docklands; if any private companies are considering contributing to this extension: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in reply to a question from the hon. Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) today. LRT will shortly deposit a Bill for an extension of the Jubilee line prepared on the basis of an alignment via Brunswick (not Greenwich). But, I understand that it would be possible for the promoter to propose to Parliament that the route be changed during the consideration of the Bill. That could be proposed if sufficient contributions were forthcoming from those with an interest in the Greenwich alignment to offset the additional costs of that route.

Road Safety

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what information he has relating to the total sums allocated, within the road safety budget 1990-91, specifically to benefit cyclists; and if he will list the projects;

(2) what information he has relating to the total sums allocated, within the road safety budget 1990-91, specifically to benefit pedestrians; and if he will list the projects;

(3) what information he has relating to the total sums being allocated to road safety projects for 1990-91; and if he will list the projects.

Mr. Atkins: Road safety, including that of pedestrians and cyclists, is a key consideration in the road engineering and traffic management projects undertaken by my Department and the local authorities throughout Britain.

Many other agencies, including the police, education authorities, RoSPA and road user organisations also contribute significantly to road safety projects and initiatives. Associated with this work, a wide ranging programme of research and publicity will continue in 1990-91.

Because of the widespread nature of all these activities it is not possible to provide comprehensive information in the form requested.

British Rail

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the level of subsidy for British Rail in each year since 1979 both in actual and real terms.

Mr. Portillo: The subsidy paid to British Rail in each year since 1979 as public service obligation grant under EC regulation 1191/69 and as level crossings grant under EEC regulation 1192/69 was as follows:

£ million

	Cash	*1989-90 prices*
1979	516	1,024
1980	610	1,021
1981	814	1,241
1982	845	1,204
1983	870	1,184
[1]1984	843	1,093
1985-86	849	1,044
1986-87	755	899
1987-88	796	901
1988-89	556	587
1989-90	[2]517	517

[1] 1984-85 was a 15-month financial period. The figure shown for 1984 is the 12-month equivalent.
[2] PSO cash ceiling plus estimate for level crossings grant.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information is maintained by his Department on British Rail's levels of punctuality.

Mr. Portillo: The Department receives information quarterly on the performance of each passenger sector against the quality objectives, including punctuality and, in addition, four-weekly reports for Network SouthEast and Provincial. British Rail reports formally on its performance against the quality of service objectives in its annual report and accounts.

Drowning, Ilfracombe

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport at what stage the police were informed about the incident in which Mark Woodward was drowned at Ilfracombe on 16 August.

Mr. McLoughlin: The police were informed at 16.44 local time.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *135*, how far the lifeboat had to travel to respond to the incident at Ilfracombe in which Mark Woodward was drowned; and whether this rate of response meets the criteria used by his Department to assess suitable response times.

Mr. McLoughlin: From the launching slip to the location of the incident was a distance of approximately a quarter of a mile. To reach the launching slip the Ilfracombe lifeboat has to proceed by road from the boat house, also a distance of approximately a quarter of a mile. From advising the lifeboat launching authority to lifeboat on scene was 13 minutes.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *135*, from which document he is quoting in his reference to reports of a person on the rocks, cut off by tide; and whether this reference to a single person affected is confirmed by other sources.

Mr. McLoughlin: Two almost simultaneous reports, one direct, the other re-routed from Milford Haven, were received at Swansea. The first suggested two persons cut off by tide, the second indicated a single person. All references are recorded in coastguard logs.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *135*, whether the times of 16.20, 16.24, 16.35 and 16.41 to which he refers are log times or electronic tape times.

Mr. McLoughlin: Log times.

Swansea Coastguard

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his reply of 31 October, *Official Report*, column *135*, if he will indicate for each of the five personnel on duty at the Swansea coastguard station *(a)* the number of hours worked in total that day and *(b)* the start and end times of shifts.

Mr. McLoughlin: The three regular coastguard officers each worked 12 hours from 0800 to 2000 and each had a meal break of 1½ hours in this period. In addition, auxiliary coastguard staff worked the following hours: two auxiliaries 0700 to 1300, one auxiliary 1200 to 1800 covering meal breaks and two auxiliaries 1300 to 1900. At no time were there fewer than four staff on watch.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the normal watch strength at the Swansea coastguard station; what representations were made earlier this year to the district management about the watch strength; and what action was taken, or is planned, as a result of these representations.

Mr. McLoughlin: The minimum watch level is three regular coastguard officers. However, the normal target is four regular officers on watch.

Staff representations regarding manning have been considered at district, regional and headquarters level. The present complement is considered adequate for the task.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether any regular difficulties were experienced in maintaining the watch strength earlier this year at the Swansea coastguard station as a result of leave entitlement, training absences, sick leave, prior engagements, or the secondment of staff to other duties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. McLoughlin: Some difficulty was experienced during July 1989 in maintaining the watch strength due to

a spate of short-term sickness which coincided with previously arranged staff leave and training absences. On no occasion, however, did the watch strength fall below the minimum requirement of three regular officers on watch. On the few occasions when there was only the minimum regular watch strength, the fourth person on watch was provided by use of an auxiliary coastguard.

Coastguard

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the normal policy on informing the police when emergency calls are made to the coastguard.

Mr. McLoughlin: The police are informed immediately if their assistance is required. The nature of the incident dictates whether police involvement is necessary.

Ilfracombe Harbour

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the policy of his Department on the making of payments to boats in Ilfracombe harbour to monitor emergency frequencies and to respond if required.

Mr. McLoughlin: No payments are made to vessels to monitor emergency frequencies. A master or person in charge of a vessel has an obligation, so far as he can do so without serious danger to his own vessel, her crew and passengers (if any), to render assistance on receiving a signal from any source that a ship, aircraft or person is in distress.

Scottish Airports Policy

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will call for research on noise number index contours around Glasgow airport relating to the impact of new transatlantic services and their interaction with European and shorthaul services before the consultation period on Scottish lowland airports policy closes.

Mr. McLoughlin: No. My right hon. Friend has responsibility for the mitigation of noise at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports. At other United Kingdom airports, including Glasgow, that responsibility lies with the airport operator.

Docklands Light Railway

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on the proposal to extend the docklands light railway to Lewisham; what assistance the Government are considering offering to this extension; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: London Regional Transport has submitted an appraisal of a southern extension of the docklands light railway to Greenwich and Lewisham and is still investigating possible sources of finance. Decisions on the funding of the project cannot therefore be taken at this stage.

Disabled People

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on behalf of disabled people on the difficulties they face in hailing and booking taxis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: The Department is in constant touch with disabled people and the organisations representing them.

Hailing and booking taxis has been a particular problem for wheelchair users. My Department was involved in the development of a wheelchair accessible London-type taxi. From 1 February this year all newly registered taxis in London have had to be wheelchair accessible and there are already 2,000 operating in the capital.

Disabled people are now able to state their requirements when pre-booking taxis through the booking agencies. At present a suitable vehicle cannot always be guaranteed. As the pool of wheelchair accessible taxis grows, wheelchair users will not only be able to pre-book taxis with greater certainty; they will also be able to hail suitable vehicles in the street.

London Rail Studies

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what decisions he has taken on the major new lines proposed by the central and east London rail studies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: I am pleased to be able to give the go-ahead to the first major addition to London's Underground network since the Victoria line was approved, a quarter of a century ago.

The extension of the Jubilee line to docklands was recommended by the east London rail study. I am authorising LRT to deposit a Bill for this extension, which is to be routed from Green park via Westminster, Waterloo and London bridge, along the south bank of the Thames to Surrey docks, beneath the river again to Canary wharf on the Isle of Dogs, and thence via Canning Town to Stratford. This will greatly support regeneration of docklands; it will relieve congestion on roads and the existing rail network including the docklands light railway; and it will further strengthen public transport links with BR lines at Waterloo (including the new Channel tunnel terminal) and at London bridge. The new line will also much improve accessibility for areas south of the Thames in Southwark and Bermondsey and in London's east end in Tower Hamlets and Newham that are not now well served by public transport. I know how welcome this news will be in those areas.

The Jubilee extension will cost about £1 billion in today's prices to which developers will over time be making a cash contribution of over £400 million. I warmly welcome this contribution, which is of an unprecedented scale. This is a further example of public and private sector co-operation to the mutual benefit of both. The net cost to Government is approximately £40 million in 1990-91 and £150 million and £240 million in the following two years. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury has agreed that these sums should be made available from the public expenditure reserve which was set with this in mind.

The development of docklands is itself bound to ease pressure on transport and other services in central London. What is more, the central London rail study proposed a two-fold strategy to relieve congestion in the rail network serving the central area: a major upgrading programme to make the fullest possible use of the existing lines; and the construction of two major new lines.

The major upgrading programme is already under way. I have approved record levels of investment by London

Underground and Network SouthEast to enable them to improve services and increase capacity. The Central line is to be re-equipped with new signalling and 85 new trains; a start is to be made on a similar upgrading of the Northern line; major works are either in hand or being planned to increase capacity at the most congested underground stations including Angel, Victoria, Waterloo, London Bridge, Tottenham Court Road, Kings Cross and Holborn; and, during the last 12 months we have approved nearly 1,200 new vehicles for Network SouthEast.

I welcome BR's proposals to develop their very successful Thameslink services, which at present carry through services from Luton and Bedford via King's Cross and Blackfriars to Brighton and other places south of London. Eighty more vehicles will be introduced next year, and the new St. Paul's Thameslink station will open in the spring. Off-peak services frequencies will increase next year. Provision of nearly £100 million has been made in the public expenditure settlement for the new trains and for design work and land acquisition principally at King's Cross for the next phase of development. The total project looks promising and the extra services would make a valuable contribution to the relief of congestion. BR hopes to be ready to seek legislative powers by November 1990.

But I recognise that more must be done to meet longer-term requirements. Further work has been carried out since the central London rail study report was published in January this year. This has confirmed the view that, as well as the major upgradings now approved, additions to the network will be needed to relieve congestion in the central area as the London economy continues to grow over the rest of this century. Any one of the new lines under discussion would cost at least £1·5 billion to build at today's prices and would be a major engineering project affecting central London during its construction. For these reasons we are not currently planning to start on more than one new central area line, in addition to the Jubilee extension. Further work is necessary to decide which of the options offers the most practicable and cost-effective solution. In reaching this decision, my aim is to ensure that we select the line which will best serve the travelling public who will benefit from it and who will contribute to its costs through the fares they pay.

It is important that we make good progress in completing this further assessment. I have therefore instructed that it should be completed in time for a decision during next year on the path of a new line, on its timing and its funding. Subject to the satisfactory outcome of this further work, I would expect to authorise the introduction of a Bill in November 1990.

The upgrading of the present system, the Jubilee line extension, the improvements to Thameslink and a new line through central London would transform London's rail network over the next decade.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Correspondence

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information his Department has on the length of time taken to respond to letters from hon. Members.

Mr. Cope: The dates of receipt and of response to the majority of correspondence received from hon. Members by the Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Departments is incorporated in the basic data for each item.

Integrated Schools

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what definition he intends to make of what constitutes an integrated school; what provision he intends to make to secure balanced enrolment in an integrated school; what provision for balance between both traditions in Northern Ireland he intends to provide on the governing bodies of integrated schools; what representations he has received about the definition and appointment of foundation governors and schemes of management for schools which opt for grant-maintained integrated status; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: It is clearly inherent in the concept of integrated schooling that substantial numbers of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils should be educated together. It is also vital that the management and ethos of an integrated school should be such as to ensure that parents perceive the school as guaranteeing equality of respect and treatment for all pupils regardless of their religious denomination. To require a balanced enrolment would, however, imply the enrolment of Protestants and Roman Catholics in roughly equal numbers. This would have the effect of denying integrated status to all but a few schools, defeating the Government's objective of enabling as many parents as possible to aspire to have their children educated with children from both traditions.

A distinctive constitution will be introduced for the board of governors of a grant-maintained integrated school. There will be two categories of directly appointed governors, namely, foundation governors and Department of Education appointees, together with two categories of elected governors, representing parents and teachers. For the Department's part, it will be required to choose persons committed to the viability of the school as an integrated school and it will seek to ensure that there is a broad balance of interests among those appointed.

Some representations have been made that, where an existing school with an integrated ethos acquired grant-maintained integrated status, the legislation should ensure that existing practice for the appointment of foundation governors and the existing provisions of its instrument of government should continue to apply. However, since integrated status will be available to a wide range of schools, with different constitutions, it would be inappropriate to seek to make detailed statutory provision for the definition and appointment of foundation governors or for schemes of management. The Government, nevertheless, fully intend that the transition to grant-maintained integrated status for a school should be made with the maximum degree of continuity consistent with its former status. In particular, it will be for the school governors themselves to draw up a scheme of management for the school for approval by the Department.

Security Fence (Newtownards)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has given planning permission to the new security fence at Short Brothers'

factory in Newtownards; to how many adjoining landowners notices of the planning application were served; and what provision he intends to make for access from Church street court to Half Acre lane to Corry street in Newtownards.

Mr. Needham: Planning permission was granted to Shorts plc in 1981 for, among other things, fencing at its Newtownards factory. This was before the introduction of the non-statutory neighbour notification scheme. The firm indicated to the DOE(NI) recently that it proposed to erect additional fencing and that a new planning application would be submitted. Both the new and original proposals showed a fence at either end of Forde street thus closing it off to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. All rights-of-way through Forde street were extinguished by the NI Housing Executive in 1982 and the DOE(NI) has no plans to provide alternative access from Church street court.

Fire Service

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he will take to ensure that the application in respect of the Carrickfergus site for the fire authority is not delayed pending the outcome of the appeal in respect of the Newtownabbey site to which neighbours objected.

Mr. Needham: The Carrickfergus application was approved on 25 October 1989.

Mr. Roy Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he is satisfied with progress made in respect of the planning application related to a site for the fire authority in Carrickfergus.

Mr. Needham: Yes, considering the complexity of the planning issues involved. The application was approved on 25 October 1989.

Chief Constable

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what restrictions on nationality apply to candidates for the post of Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Cope: To be eligible for appointment all police officers of any grade in the United Kingdom must be:

(a) a British citizen; or

(b) a Commonwealth citizen (other than a British citizen) or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, in which case one of the following conditions must be satisfied:

(i) at least one parent must be, or have been at death a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland; or

(ii) the candidate must have resided in a country or territory within the Commonwealth or in the Republic of Ireland, or have been employed elsewhere in the service of the Crown, or partly have so resided and partly been so employed, for at least five years out of the last eight years preceding the date of his appointment.

Education Reform

Mr. Ashdown: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he has met all of the bodies who submitted a response to the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989; what were the results of these meetings which have taken place; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will list all the bodies who submitted a response to the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Cyprus

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last made an official visit to Cyprus; and if he has any plans to visit Cyprus.

Mr. Brooke: I have not visited Cyprus as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I have no plans to do so.

Scheduled Offences

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give the number of persons convicted of scheduled offences in Northern Ireland, separately, for each calendar year since the commencement of the Emergency Provisions Act 1973.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* Information similar to that requested is published in the returns on the Emergency Provisions Act, but I will write to the hon. Member.

Industrial Development

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those advanced and refurbished factories for new investment which were either sold or leased by the industrial development board, in each of the years since 1980, giving details by district council area.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 8 November 1989]:* The information requested is set out below. It relates to vacant factories over 750 sq m.

District council	*Sold*	*Leased*
Antrim		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	1
1982-83	—	1
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	1	—
1985-86	—	1
1986-87	—	1
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	2
1989-90	—	—

District council	*Sold*	*Leased*
Ards		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	1
1982-83	—	1
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	1
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	1	—
1989-90	—	1

District council	Sold	Leased
Armagh		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Ballymena		
1980–81	—	—
1981–82	—	—
1982–83	—	1
1983–84	—	—
1984–85	—	1
1985–86	—	1
1986–87	1	—
1987–88	—	—
1988–89	—	—
1989–90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Ballymoney		
1980–81	—	—
1981–82	—	—
1982–83	—	1
1983–84	—	—
1984–85	—	1
1985–86	—	—
1986–87	—	1
1987–88	—	—
1988–89	—	—
1989–90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Bonbridge		
1980–81	—	—
1981–82	—	—
1982–83	—	—
1983–84	—	—
1984–85	—	—
1985–86	—	—
1986–87	—	—
1987–88	—	—
1988–89	—	—
1989–90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Belfast		
1980-81	—	2
1981-82	—	3
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	3
1984-85	1	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	2
1988-89	4	1
1989-90	2	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Carrickfergus		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Castlereagh		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	2	—
1989-90	—	1

District council	Sold	Leased
Coleraine		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	—	1
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Craigavon		
1980-81	—	1
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	3
1983-84	—	4
1984-85	1	—
1985-86	1	—
1986-87	—	4
1987-88	2	1
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Derry		
1980-81	—	1
1981-82	—	2
1982-83	—	1
1983-84	—	3
1984-85	—	2
1985-86	—	1
1986-87	1	2
1987-88	—	1
1988-89	1	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Down		
1980-81	—	1
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	1
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	1	1
1988-89	1	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Dungannon		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	1
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Fermanagh		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	1
1982-83	—	2
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	1
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	1
1987-88	—	1
1988-89	1	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Larne		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	1
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	—	2
1985-86	—	1
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	2
1988-89	—	1
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Limavady		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	1
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	4	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Lisburn		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	1
1982-83	—	2
1983-84	—	4
1984-85	—	4
1985-86	—	1
1986-87	1	1
1987-88	2	—
1988-89	1	—
1989-90	4	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Magherafelt		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Moyle		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Newry and Mourne		
1980-81	—	1
1981-82	—	2
1982-83	—	3
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	—	1
1985-86	2	1
1986-87	2	—
1987-88	2	1
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	1

District council	Sold	Leased
Newtonabbey		
1980-81	—	1
1981-82	—	3
1982-83	—	—
1983-84	—	1
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	1	—
1986-87	1	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	1	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
North Down		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	1
1982-83	—	1
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	1
1986-87	—	1
1987-88	1	—
1988-89	3	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Omagh		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	1
1982-83	—	1
1983-84	—	3
1984-85	—	—
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	—	—
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	—	—
1989-90	—	—

District council	Sold	Leased
Strabane		
1980-81	—	—
1981-82	—	—
1982-83	—	1
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	—	1
1985-86	—	—
1986-87	1	1
1987-88	—	—
1988-89	1	—
1989-90	—	—

Competitive Tendering

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has about the consequences of so-called free hours offered by contractors upon the quality and cost of services put out to competitive tendering.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* None. Once a contract has been let, the contractor is obliged to provide the service to the agreed quality standard within the contract price.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his advice to health and social services boards as to how they should treat tenders submitted by contractors which contain qualifications as to the number of man-hours required to carry them out and who offer so-called free hours.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* The health and social services boards are expected to conduct the evaluation of tenders on a fully equitable basis. This includes assessing whether the man-hours proposed by private contractors are adequate to provide a quality service.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps were taken in advance of the Western health and social services board's award of a tender for catering services to ascertain the performance record of tendering contractors on previous projects for other authorities.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* In accordance with the Department of Health and Social Services' circular, the Western health and social services board assessed the capabilities of each potential contractor, including checking references and making visits to establish the company's performance record.

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether every company which has tendered for health service contracts in Northern Ireland in the last year has complied with the provisions of the Fair Employment Act (Northern Ireland); and what information he has as to whether each of them awarded contracts has subsequently satisfied the provisions of the Act.

Mr. Needham: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Family Credit

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many full-time farmers, in each district council area, are in receipt of family credit.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The information is not available.

Income Support

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many part-time farmers, in each district council area, are in receipt of income support.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 November 1989]* The latest available figure for Northern Ireland is 2,340 at 31 May 1988. The numbers in each district council area are not known.

Source: 5 per cent. sample (Income Support ASE)

Farmers

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the total number of *(a)* full-time farmers and *(b)* part-time farmers in each district council area of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* Agricultural census data for Northern Ireland are not at present analysed by district council area. Analyses are available by rural districts and counties and the relevant figures for 1989 are provided in the accompanying table. An analysis by district council areas will be produced in early 1990.

District	Full-time	Part-time
1. Antrim	752	461
2. Ballycastle	488	199
3. Ballymena	1,305	573
4. Ballymoney	840	337
5. Newtonabbey	21	12
6. Larne	645	373
7. Lisburn	404	227
8. County Antrim urban 9. Belfast, County Antrim	21	13
County Antrim total	4,476	2,195

District	Full-time	Part-time
10. Armagh	1,409	734
11. Lurgan	315	171
12. Newry No. 2	1,008	561
13. Tadragee	155	75
14. County Armagh urban	13	7
County Armagh total	2,900	1,348
15. Banbridge	986	473
16. Castlereagh	50	31
17. East Down	834	473
18. Hillsborough	558	343
19. South Down	500	282
20. Moira	218	116
21. Newry No. 1	638	304
22. North Down	804	353
23. County Down urban 24. Belfast, County Down	16	20
County Down total	4,604	2,395
25. Enniskillen	965	442
26. Irvinestown	588	420
27. Lisnaskea	1,094	562
28. County Fermanagh urban	1	0
County Fermanagh total	2,648	1,424
29. Coleraine	809	335
30. Limavady	643	304
31. Londonderry	435	210
32. Magherafelt	1,269	617
33. County Londonderry urban	8	0
County Londonderry total	3,164	1,466
34. Castlederg	459	223
35. Clogher	628	292
36. Cookstown	822	449
37. Dungannon	1,001	587
38. Omagh	1,734	923
39. Strabane	759	304
40. County Tyrone urban	4	4
County Tyrone total	5,407	2,782
Northern Ireland total	23,199	11,810

Severe Disablement Premium

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total number of recipients of severe disablement premium.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The latest available figure is 820 at 31 May 1988.

Source: 5 per cent. sample (Income Support ASE)

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total number of applicants for invalid care allowance *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused, in each year since it was introduced.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The information is as follows:

Year	Granted	Refused
1976	683	1,649
1977	277	97
1978	228	189
1979	262	249
1980	242	152
1981	214	140
1982	243	97
1983	172	101
1984	183	89
1985	156	353
1986	1,264	1,128
1987	3,528	2,611
1988	1,849	2,493

Attendance Allowance

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total number of applications for attendance allowance in Northern Ireland which were *(a)* received and *(b)* refused in each year since 1980.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The information is as follows:

Year	Number received	Number refused[1]
1980	8,096	2,724
1981	8,125	2,457
1982	9,933	2,955
1983	11,043	2,958
1984	12,043	2,582
1985	12,285	2,587
1986	12,409	3,115
1987	13,951	3,958
1988	15,709	5,539

[1] Claims refused may not necessarily have been received that year.

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total number of applications in Northern Ireland for attendance allowance granted at *(a)* the higher rate and *(b)* the lower rate in each year since 1980.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The information is as follows:

Year	Higher rate	Lower rate
1980	2,266	2,884
1981	2,327	2,724
1982	3,013	3,406
1983	3,831	4,107
1984	4,146	4,516
1985	3,637	3,889
1986	3,995	4,450
1987	4,099	4,459
1988	4,724	5,622

Public Bodies

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all the statutory and public bodies appointed by him, giving a list of their functions and total budgets.

Mr. Cope: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Home Helps

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total number of home help hours provided by each health board in Northern Ireland in each year since 1980.

Mr. Needham: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Kincora Boys' Home

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will appoint an inquiry into events at the Kincora boy's home in Northern Ireland, with specific terms of reference to consider allegations of criminal activites by Crown employees.

Mr. Cope: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will reply to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North's letter of 4 September concerning the expert evidence of Mr. Radley confirming the authenticity of the memorandum drawn up by Mr. Colin Wallace on the Kincora boys' home dated 8 November 1974.

Mr. Brooke: I shall write to the hon. Member very shortly.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give details for each of the years from 1980 to 30 September 1989 of members of *(a)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary and *(b)* the Royal Ulster Constabulary Reserve serving in Northern Ireland who have (i) voluntarily resigned having been involved in an offence, (ii) been discharged having been convicted of an offence and (iii) had their engagements terminated following the commission of an offence, but before trial; and what was the nature of the offence in each case.

Mr. Cope: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Convicted Soldiers (Possession of Documents)

Mr. Mallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in relation to the recent conviction of Corporal Cameron Hastie of the Regular Army and Private Joanne Garvin of the Ulster Defence Regiment under section 22(1)C of the Emergency Provisions (N.I.) Act 1987 for possession of documents likely to be of use to terrorists, whether any persons listed in the documents in respect of which charges were brought, or persons associated with such persons, have since been the victim of terrorist attack; and whether steps have been taken by the police to ensure the security of those listed.

Mr. Cope: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Queen's University (Courses)

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students attending Queen's university, Belfast, are involved in courses of study of less than 21 hours per week.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information is not available in the form requested.

Health and Social Security Staff

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons have applied for posts in the Department of Health and Social Security in Northern Ireland in each of the last three months; what has been the cost of processing such applications in each month; and whether an acknowledgement and a full reply has been sent to each applicant.

Mr. Needham: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Limavady Bypass

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) when he expects to make a decision on the route of the Limavady bypass; (2) whether he has completed his economic assessment of the Limavady bypass.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Lead Contamination

Mr. John P. Smith: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will take steps to ensure that farmers affected by lead contamination controls receive full payment from the milk marketing board for November and December.

Mr. Curry: This is a matter for the milk marketing board.

Cattle Dealers

Mr. Cox: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the number of cattle dealers in England and Wales who have been summonsed for causing unnecessary suffering to animals exported to Europe for slaughter in each of the last three years.

Mr. Maclean: There have been no such prosecutions during this period on matters subject to British jurisdiction.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations have been made to the European Community Commission concerning the planned end of milk quotas in 1992; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Curry: Current Community quota regulations extend only until the end of March 1992. The Commission is obliged to produce a report on their future by March 1991. I have emphasised to them the need for more flexible rules on quota transfers.

Poultry Farming

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make a statement about any proposed modification to the recently announced regulations relating to poultry farming.

Mr. Maclean: Two new orders came into effect on 26 October 1989, modifying previous requirements relating to testing of poultry flocks for salmonella. I have no plans at present to make further changes to this legislation.

Animal Feed

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will introduce a requirement for regular inspections of materials to be used in the manufacture of animal feedstuffs awaiting milling;

(2) if he will take steps to grant powers to trading standards officers to impound suspect feedstuffs on import while awaiting sample analysis;

(3) if he will take steps to prohibit the use of the term replacer product on animal feedstuffs and to substitute a requirement for accurate labelling of products;

(4) if he will take steps to require a full declaration of all ingredients, including country of origin, on all animal feedstuffs;

(5) if he will take steps to require all imports of animal feedstuffs to be identified by a batch number;

(6) if he will take steps to require mandatory product testing of animal feedstuffs at the mill.

Mr. Gummer: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Partridges

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Linlithgow of 13 November, if he will initiate research into the effect of organophosphates on partridges.

Mr. Curry: There are no current proposals to study the effect of organophosphorus pesticides on partridges, as opposed to other bird species. However, new research findings are continually being evaluated and taken into consideration in the planning of MAFF's further research programme, including the selection of appropriate species for study.

Horses and Ponies (Export)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Ealing, North of 7 November, what steps he intends to take to ensure that the objective of adequate welfare standards are achieved during journeys of horses and ponies for export; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maclean: The negotiations on the draft EC regulation on the protection of animals during transport will cover areas such as vehicle standards, feeding and watering arrangements, proper separation and other transport conditions. In all these areas we will seek to ensure that the welfare of the animals is fully protected and that the requirements are properly enforced throughout the Community.

Animals (Slaughter)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the number of live animals exported to Europe for slaughter in each of the last three years.

Mr. Maclean: The following table gives the number of animals inspected and certified as fit for transportation prior to export from Great Britain.

	For immediate slaughter	*For further fattening before slaughter*				
Year	*Cattle*	*Sheep*	*Cattle*	*Calves*	*Sheep*	*Pigs*
1986	187	154,017	—	190,683	7,745	1,321
1987	1,014	182,781	574	365,166	130,775	—
1988	136	262,647	323	234,651	184,120	—

Sheep Variable Premium

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will extend the period over which the reduction of the sheep variable premium takes place from the calendar year 1990 to the end of the financial year 1990-91.

Mr. Curry: As part of a reformed sheepmeat regime the sheep variable premium scheme is to be phased out in stages during the calendar years 1990 to 1992. The United Kingdom has retained the right to end the scheme before the end of 1992. We will continue to consult closely all those concerned with the scheme, and will take decisions on the best way of ending the premium on the basis of the views expressed to us and on experience in the market.

Knackers' Yards

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make a statement about recent proposals by the European Community Commission concerning knackers' yards.

Mr. Maclean: The Commission proposals for the disposal of animal waste, including dead and casualty stock, have recently been presented to Council. We are considering the implications in consultation with the interests concerned prior to Community discussion.

Emergency Warnings

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will raise at the Council of Ministers the need for increased co-ordination between European veterinary services in relation to emergency warnings.

Mr. Maclean: Liaison between member states' veterinary authorities is in general very good. But if experience of the current outbreak of contamination of animal feed indicates that improvements in co-ordination between member states are necessary, we will not hesitate to press for them.

Sheep

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to prevent unnecessary suffering to sheep exported from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Maclean: As part of our controls my Department ensures that all animals are properly rested, offered food and water and inspected for fitness to travel at approved lairages prior to export from Great Britain. In the light of allegations concerning a consignment of sheep exported last month we have withheld certain export licences and have asked the French authorities, who are responsible for welfare controls on their territory, to investigate the incident.

Cattle Deaths

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the incidence by numbers, date and location by county of cattle deaths during the last three months arising from lead or other heavy metal poisoning.

Mr. Maclean: The following table lists the numbers, date and location by county of reported deaths in cattle since 1 August 1989 which have been diagnosed by the veterinary investigation service as being due to lead or other heavy metal poisoning as a result of the examination of carcases or other material submitted to their laboratories (as of 15 November 1989):

Number of cattle reported to have died	*Month*[1]	*County*	*Heavy metal poison*
2	August	Cumbria	Lead
2	August	Cumbria	Lead
1	August	Derbyshire	Lead
3	August	Lancashire	Lead
1	September	Cambridgeshire	Lead
1	September	Cumbria	Lead
1	September	Cumbria	Lead
1	September	Derbyshire	Lead
1	September	Gwynedd	Lead
2	September	Lancashire	Lead
2	September	West Glamorgan	Lead
1	October	Cornwall	Lead
1	October	Cornwall	Lead[2]
2	October	Cornwall	Lead[2]
2	October	Devon	Lead[2]
7	October	Devon	Lead[2]
1	October	Devon	Lead[2]
1	October	Devon	Lead[2]
2	October	Devon	Lead[2]
3	October	Devon	Lead[2]
3	October	Devon	Lead[2]
1	October	Devon	Lead[2]
1	October	Durham	Lead
1	October	Durham	Lead
3	October	Lancashire	Lead
2	October	Lancashire	Lead
6	October	Leicestershire	Lead[2]
1	November	Cornwall	Lead[2]
3	November	Derbyshire	Lead[2]
2	November	Devon	Lead

[1] Month in which incident is reported to have started on the premises involved.
[2] Includes 33 deaths attributed to lead contaminated feed.

Eggs

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) on 1 November, *Official Report*, column 210, what provisions exists for *(a)* following up on tests which prove positive for salmonella poisoning, *(b)* tracing the contaminated eggs back to their origin and *(c)* having the flocks from whence the contaminated imported eggs came either tested or tested and slaughtered;

(2) pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) on 1 November, *Official Report*, column 210, why no consignments of imported eggs have been destroyed;

(3) pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) on 1 November, *Official Report*, column 210, what constitutes a consignment of eggs; how long after the 60 eggs are removed from the consignment for testing the test results are known; whether the consignment, having had 60 eggs removed for testing is then allowed to proceed and disperse its eggs to retail sellers before test results have been obtained; and what provisions exist for recalling or withdrawing the dispersed eggs from retailers' shelves if testing proves positive for salmonella contamination.

Mr. Curry: No consignments of imported eggs have been destroyed as a result of finding invasive salmonella contamination in a sample. It can take at least five days to test for and confirm invasive salmonella in a sample of eggs. It would, on present evidence, be an unjustified interference in trade to detain any consignment of eggs pending the outcome of a test.

A consignment of eggs is a quantity consigned by one exporter to one importer at one time and, typically, would be a container load.

We have taken up each of the six positive identifications of salmonella in imported eggs with the member states concerned. In doing so we have informed them of the identity of the authorised packing centre involved whenever possible. It is for each member state to decide on the action to be taken in its territory.

Wheat

Mr. Key: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the tonnage for *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* all European Community countries of intervention stocks of wheat in each of the past five years.

Mr. Curry: A note setting out the volume of stocks of agricultural commodities held in intervention and assisted private storage in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the EC as a whole, is deposited in the Library of the House and is updated monthly. These notes show that the volume of wheat held in intervention on 31 December (or the nearest available date) in each of the past five years was as follows:

Total Wheat Stocks ('000 tonnes)

Year	*United Kingdom*	*EC*
1984	2,113	8,783
1985	3,674	10,026
1986	2,621	7,703
1987	561	2,909
1988	455	3,361

Basking Sharks

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) if he will make a statement on how the quota of 400 tonnes of basking shark levels under the EC-Norwegian agreement is determined;

(2) when he expects the EC-Norwegian agreement on basking shark quota to be decided; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether he has plans to withdraw basking shark from the EC-Norwegian agreement; and if he will make a statement;

Mr. Curry: The Norwegian quota for basking shark in Community waters is set as part of the annual EC-Norway overall fisheries arrangements. The quota is set with regard to the data available on the status of the stock as well as the amount sought. The details for the 1990 arrangements are presently being discussed and final agreement should

be reached by mid-December. In recent years the quota has been set at 400 tonnes of basking shark liver, although actual catches have been far below this level or nil. As the data available indicates there has been no decline in the stock in Community waters since 1978, should Norway request an allocation for 1990 in the context of the annual arrangement to exchange fisheries opportunities I have no plans to argue against a quota within reasonable levels.

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the yearly catch for basking sharks under the EC-Norwegian agreement for each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Curry: The Norwegian quota for basking sharks in Community waters is set on the basis of liver weight. Over the last 10 years the landings of liver in tonnes have been as follows:

	Tonnes
1979	30·0
1980	Nil
1981	Nil
1982	40·0
1983	13·0
1984	48·7
1985	39·4
1986	13·0
1987	Nil
1988	Nil

DEFENCE

Warships (South Korea)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British warships have made a visit to South Korea in each of the past five years.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: In the last five years, Royal Navy warships have visited South Korea as follows:

	Number
1985	2
1986	3
1987	2
1988	None
1989	1

UN Staff (South Korea)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British personnel are attached to the United Nations staff in South Korea.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) on 20 March 1989 at column *474*.

Armitage Shanks

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those British suppliers who could provide for the Royal Navy the products currently supplied by Armitage Shanks at Barrhead.

Mr. Neubert: I will write to the hon. Member.

British Midland (London-Belfast Flight)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has of an explosion in the air near a British Midland aeroplane on a flight from London to Belfast at approximately 2030 hours on Saturday 11 November 1989; what information he has on who was responsible for this explosion; was this aeroplane in danger; was any terrorist organisation involved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

AIDS

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many cases of service men with AIDS have been notified to him for the year *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and the current year to date.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to the hon. Member.

Farnborough

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what Ministry of Defence personnel are represented on the Farnborough airfield civil enclave liaison committee.

Mr. Neubert: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are any plans to change the current restrictions on the weight of aircraft using the civil enclave at Farnborough airfield.

Mr. Neubert: I will write to the hon. Member.

RAVC, Melton Mowbray

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make it his policy that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will not announce any decision on the future of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Melton Mowbray, prior to *(a)* his forthcoming visit to the base, *(b)* having discussed the planning aspects with the Melton borough council and *(c)* meeting the hon. Member for Rutland and Melton on this matter.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to my hon. Friend.

Chemical Weapons

Mr. Bayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if any Warsaw pact country currently deploys its own chemical weapons;

(2) if any Warsaw pact country currently manufactures chemical weapons;

(3) if he will make a statement on current and recent progress in the negotiations for a chemical weapons convention;

(4) if he will make a statement on the contingency plans for the safety and security of United States unitary chemical weapons stocks while being removed from the General Republic of Germany to the United States of America through United Kingdom territorial waters, airspace or land;

(5) if his Department has a capability to measure the size of the Soviet chemical weapons stockpile, independently of United States capabilities;

(6) what has been his response to the United States Government's policy that chemical weapons will continue to be produced following the signing of an agreement on destruction of existing chemical weapon stocks;

(7) what is his latest assessment of the size of the Soviet chemical weapons stockpile; and to what time period this assessment refers;

(8) what recent changes have been observed in the Soviet chemical weapons and chemical warfare agents stockpiles;

(9) what recent communications he has received from the United States Defence Department concerning changes in its assessment of the size of the Soviet chemical weapons or chemical warfare agents stockpiles.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

Aircraft Noise

Sir Eldon Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has completed his review of the possibility of providing insulation or injurious compensation to mobile home and caravan dwellers affected by military aircraft noise levels that exceed 70 decibels; and how soon he expects to make known his conclusions.

Mr. Neubert: My noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces will write to my hon. Friend.

Butt of Lewis (Accident)

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what inquiry he will be holding into the recent accident involving a submarine and the fishing vessel Scatia off the Butt of Lewis; and whether he will make available the findings of that inquiry.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: I will write to the hon. Member.

HEALTH

Food Safety

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he has taken to ensure the inspection of food factories; what information he has concerning the quality of processes in such factories; whether any action has been taken against such factories in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Enforcement of food law is the responsibility of local authorities. No central records are kept of the number of actions taken against food processing factories which are inspected by environmental health officers. The Government's White Paper "Food Safety—Protecting the Consumer" contains proposals—amongst other things for extension of enforcement in food processing factories by permitting additional inspection by trading standards officers. The Government's intentions to make regulations on stricter food storage temperatures and to introduce tighter controls on certain food processes have been announced previously. Taken together, these measures will give local enforcement authorities an enhanced inspectorate role.

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the number of patients in each health district for which figures are available who are on waiting lists for operations for which they have ceased to have a need.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We do not collect figures on this centrally. However, studies have shown that some waiting lists, especially the larger ones, are inflated with the names of people who no longer need treatment. Health authorities have been asked to validate their lists to ensure that they are up to date. In the six months to March 1989, a total of 110,000 patients were removed from the lists for reasons other than treatment.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the number of patients on hospital waiting lists at 31 March aged *(a)* under 65, *(b)* 65 to 75 and *(c)* 75 years and over;

(2) what was the number of patients on hospital waiting lists in each case aged *(a)* under 65, *(b)* 65 to 75 and *(c)* 75 years and over for (i) varicose veins, hernias, (ii) hip replacement operations, (iii) operations on other joints and (iv) cataracts.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We do not collect this information centrally.

Life-saving Equipment

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effect on patient care of the shortage of trained permanent staff to operate essential life-saving equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: It is for individual health authorities to assess the level of and requirement for specific groups of staff and what kind of skill mix is required to deliver individual services.

There are some shortages of staff in high technology areas, as in others. Health authorities have an increasingly flexible range of pay and conditions of service systems to help deal with these, in addition to local measures to improve recruitment, retention and return which we have urged them to introduce.

Geriatric Provision, Huddersfield

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the numbers of psycho-geriatric and geriatric beds in each hospital within the Huddersfield area health authority on 1 January 1980, 1 January 1988, and at the present time; and what is his estimate for 1 January 1991.

Mr. Freeman: I shall write to the hon. Member with such information as is available as soon as possible.

North West RHA

Mr. Orme: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he last met the chairman of the North West regional health authority; and what was discussed.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have regular meetings with the chairmen of the regional health authorities, including Mr. Bruce Martin the chairman of the North Western regional health authority. I last met them on 14 November when we discussed a number of management issues.

Quality Assurance

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the quality assurance activities introduced by the chief executive of the National Health Service management executive will measure rehabilitation services in hospital and after discharge for *(a)* patients who have undergone surgery, *(b)* patients who have suffered a disability or disabling illness, including cerebral vascular accident and *(c)* patients with long-term chronic disabilities or conditions such as arthritis or Parkinson's disease.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The guidance issued by the chief executive in his letter of 22 June asked health authorities to develop systematic unit-based quality review programmes for all the services for which they are responsible. It will be for individual units to determine how they assess the effectiveness of particular services within their quality programmes.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance will be used under the quality assurance activities introduced in the National Health Service in June *(a)* to measure quality of long-stay care, *(b)* to provide information to patients and *(c)* to assess patients' satisfaction.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The guidance issued to the Health Service in June stressed the importance of health authorities having good quality information leaflets and regularly testing the views of patients about their local health services. It also emphasised the need for quality assurance programmes to be applied to all services and activities. We shall issue further guidance on these issues as necessary.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the quality assurance activities introduced in the National Health Service in June will cover long-stay care.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The quality assurance programmes which health authorities are preparing in response to the chief executive's letter of 22 June are expected to cover all services for which they are responsible.

Artificial Limbs

Mr. George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the average waiting period for artificial limbs to be supplied after initial consultation in *(a)* the west midlands, *(b)* New Cross hospital, Wolverhampton and *(c)* England and Wales.

Mr. Freeman: The provision of artificial limbs in England is a matter for the Disablement Services Authority, to whom the hon. Member should address his question. Any question about limb fitting in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

"You and Your GP"

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many leaflets entitled "You and Your GP" have been published by his Department; and what has been the total cost of publishing and advertising them in national newspapers.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Trust Funds

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on health authorities' responsibility for trust funds; and if he will list the final accounts as at 31 March, from each health authority in England, Wales and Scotland under each of the following headings *(a)* capital reserves funds held in perpetuity (i) general purposes and (ii) special purposes, *(b)* capital reserves other funds (i) general purposes and (ii) special purposes and *(c)* funds held by special trustees.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to the hon. Member with the information he has requested as soon as possible. The information relating to Wales and Scotland is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Independent Consultants

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many independent consultants are retained or used on an ad hoc basis by the Health Education Authority to advise on diet and nutrition, dental health and related matters; and if he will publish a list of all such consultants in the *Official Report*, together with the date of their appointment, the matters on which they advise and the amount of any payment made to them.

Mr. Freeman: This information is not held by the Department. The use of consultants is an operational matter for the Health Education Authority and I suggest my hon. Friend approach Sir Donald Maitland, the authority's chairman, for this information.

Self-governing Hospitals

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy *(a)* that in the provision of accident and emergency services by self-governing hospitals there will be no discrimination of any kind between patients whose treatment is covered by a contract and those patients whose treatment will have to be paid for out of the hospital's own budget and *(b)* that accident and emergency facilities will continue to be made available to single homeless people who have no permanent or particular place of residence.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: A fundamental principle of the new arrangements for funding hospital services is that emergency treatment should be available immediately and without question. In the case of accident and emergency services not involving in-patient treatment it is proposed that district health authorities should place contracts which cover the needs of all who are likely to require such services not just their own residents. Where in-patient treatment is involved the cost will be charged to the district of residence.

Counterfeit Medicines

Mr. Shersby: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received concerning the importation of counterfeit pharmaceutical products; what

steps are taken by the Medicines Control Agency to prevent counterfeit products being sold in Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Representations concerning the importation of counterfeit products have been received from the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

Steps taken by the Medicines Control Agency to prevent the sale of counterfeit products involve:

(1) a sampling and testing programme operated by the Medicines Inspectorate with analysis undertaken by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Medicines Testing Laboratory at Edinburgh;

(2) an annual programme of inspection carried out by the Inspectors of the Medicines Control Agency and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. All manufacturers, importers, wholesalers and community pharmacists are inspected regularly;

(3) particular checks carried out by licensed importers to verify the identity of each batch of imported material.

We also rely on co-operation with the Customs and Excise and information received from the United Kingdom pharmaceutical industry, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, regulatory authorities in the European Community and the World Health Organisation.

We are considering whether any changes may be necessary to the United Kingdom parallel import licensing scheme. We also welcome the European Commission's recent initiative involving proposals for the licensing of wholesalers throughout the Community.

DRG Hospital Supplies

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the total value of services to the National Health Service funded by DRG Hospital Supplies and DRG Malago for the last two complete financial accounting periods.

Mr. Freeman: In the last two financial accounting periods (calendar years 1987 and 1988) the NHS has purchased DRG manufactured sterilisation packaging and other medical disposables to the estimated value of £12·25 million and £13 million respectively. Analysis by subsidiary company within the group is not available and the estimate takes no account of non-medical sales, such as stationery. I understand that DRG spent £734,000 on research and development in the NHS in 1987 and £824,000 in 1988.

Child Assessment Orders

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from which the Association of Directors of Social Services concerning the new child assessment order.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Association of Directors of Social Services expressed support for providing for a child assessment order in the Children Bill during the Bill's progress through Parliament. We have not received representations from the ADSS on this matter since these provisions were added to the Bill.

Children Bill

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give the names of the organisations that have written to him since the introduction of the Children Bill with suggestions for its improvement or amendment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Many organisations have written to colleagues, officials and me. It would be disproportionately expensive to trace and itemise all this correspondence.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he or his officials have met the Association of Directors of Social Services since the Children Bill completed its Commons stages.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I met the Association of Directors of Social Services on 9 November.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date it is anticipated that the Children Bill will be brought into effect.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: The Government's aim is to implement the main provisions by October 1991.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the cost implications of the implementation of the Children Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: Estimates were given in the financial memorandum attached to the Bill. The expenditure implications for local authorities will be taken into account in the relevant expenditure discussions.

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which local authorities have made representations to him concerning the cost implications of the Children Bill.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We have received representations from the London boroughs of Camden and Redbridge and Trafford metropolitan borough council, and from the local authority associations. These comments will be taken into account in the relevant expenditure discussions. On 22 September the Government announced grants totalling £4 million over two years for local authority staff training.

Census

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether Irish will qualify as one of the ethnic origins to be registered in the proposed form for the next census.

Mr. Freeman: The draft Order in Council for a census to be taken in Great Britain on 21 April 1991 was laid before Parliament on 13 November. The order does not specify Irish as one of the categories in the ethnic group question, but statistical information on people born in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland will be available from the separate question on country of birth.

Abortions

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the number of abortions in 1988 on girls aged 15 and under, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 years, by grounds and category of premises;

(2) what was the number of abortions in 1988 on girls aged 15 years and under, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 years, by grounds and marital status.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what was the number of abortions on *(a)* resident and *(b)* non-resident women in 1988 carried out at 18 weeks, 19 weeks, 20 weeks, 21 weeks, 22 weeks, 23 weeks, 24 weeks, 25 weeks, 26 weeks, 27 weeks and 28 weeks and over, by age, grounds and marital status;

(2) what was the number of abortions on resident and non-resident women, numbers to be given separately for *(a)* 1987, *(b)* 1988 and *(c)* the first quarter of 1989 carried out at (i) 18 weeks gestation, (ii) 19 weeks gestation, (iii) 20 weeks gestation, (iv) 21 weeks gestation, (v) 22 weeks gestation, (vi) 23 weeks gestation, (vii) 24 weeks gestation, (viii) 25 weeks gestation, (ix) 26 weeks gestation, (x) 27 weeks gestation and (xi) 28 weeks gestation and over, according to grounds and age and marital status;

(3) what was the number of abortions on resident and non-resident women (numbers to be given separately) for *(a)* 1987, *(b)* 1988 and *(c)* the first quarter of 1989, carried out at 18 weeks gestation, 19 weeks gestation, 20 weeks gestation, 21 weeks gestation, 22 weeks gestation, 23 weeks gestation, 24 weeks gestation, 25 weeks gestation, 26 weeks gestation, 27 weeks gestation, 28 weeks gestation and over, according to the age of the mother, grounds for termination, method of abortion and category of premises.

Mr. Freeman: I regret that the information requested is not readily available and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Miscarriages

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether immunisation treatment for the prevention of miscarriages is available under the National Health Service; at which hospitals the treatment is available; and if he will make a statement on the benefits of the treatment.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: No. Research into this treatment is I understand to be undertaken at St. Mary's hospital, Paddington and that so far selected private patients have participated in trials of the treatment.

Blood Transfusion Service

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the members of his Department's advisory committee on the national blood transfusion service;

(2) what assessment the advisory committee of the national blood transfusion service has made of the effect on the number of volunteer blood donors coming forward of the introduction of blood donor sessions in North East Thames regional health authority supervised by nurse managers alone;

(3) whether any regional health authorities, other than North East Thames, have indicated their intention to introduce blood donor sessions conducted by nurse managers alone;

(4) whether he will list the independent assessors who examined the procedures of North East Thames regional health authority for blood donor sessions conducted by nurse managers alone.

Mr. Freeman: The advisory committee on the national blood transfusion service (ACNBTS) last met in February 1988, and has since been disbanded. When it looked at the procedure of specially trained nurses managing blood transfusion sessions, it examined the reports of 20 assessors, who were made up of non-blood transfusion consultant haematologists from the North East Thames region, representatives of the regional medical committee (including one member of the BMA regional committee for hospital medical services), nursing officers from other transfusion centres, and non-transfusion centre nursing officers from other regions, in addition to members of the ACNBTS itself.

Based on the finding of the assessors, and a study of the detailed protocol for the scheme, the ACNBTS decided that the new procedure presented no risks to donors.

The North East Thames regional transfusion centre has indicated that there has been a very positive donor response to the introduction of this procedure as standard practice, with an increase of some 7,500 donors attending during 1988 as compared with 1987.

I understand that eight regional transfusion centres have expressed an interest in sending some of their nurses to North East Thames, to participate in their specially designed training courses. However, the decision to introduce a specially trained nurse-managed donor sessions in another regional transfusion centre is for the region to make, in consultation with the national director of the national blood transfusion service. I understand from the directorate that no other regions have informed it of definite plans to introduce blood donor sessions conducted by nurse-managers alone.

NHS Prescriptions

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the reasons for the increase in National Health Service prescriptions, free of charge, from 60·9 per cent. in 1979 to 77·5 per cent. in 1988.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: By far the biggest increase has been in the number of prescriptions dispensed for people of pensionable age. The second largest increase has been in prescriptions dispensed for people on a low income.

GP Lists

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in which circumstances a general practitioner may at present ask for and receive a premium before accepting a patient or a group of patients on to the practice list.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I will write to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

Speech Therapy

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people on average are covered by a single speech therapist; and what is the recommended number of people which one speech therapist should cover.

Mr. Freeman: In England in 1988, approximately 17,000 people were on average covered by a single (whole-time equivalent) NHS speech therapist. The Quirk committee report of 1972 recommended that there should be six whole-time equivalent speech therapists per 100,000 population.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if any study is currently underway into national target levels of speech therapy service in relation to patient groups; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The Department has sponsored a research study by Dr. Philip Davies of Oxford university which will provide estimates of the level of speech therapy service required by various groups of speech and language impaired people. The study is expected to be published shortly and we would expect health authorities to take account of the results of the study in planning speech therapy services. There are no plans to establish national target levels for the speech therapy service.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will give a breakdown of the percentages of speech therapy referrals which come from doctors and consultants, and from clinical medical officers, health visitors, community nursing, educational services, social services, speech therapists in other districts, from self-referrals and other sources.

Mr. Freeman: An estimate of the percentage breakdown of initial contacts in the year is given in the table.

Speech Therapy Services:
Percentage of initial contacts by Source of Referral: 1988-89
England

Source of Referral	*Percentage of initial contacts*
Consultants	25
General Practice	5
Other Medical	12
Health Visitor	19
Community Nursing	2
Education Service	12
Social Services	3
Self Referral	9
Speech Therapists in other Districts	2
Other Sources	11
Total all locations	100

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide a percentage breakdown of the communication—handicapped population who receive speech therapy in *(a)* the hospital site, *(b)* National Health Service premises, *(c)* local authority premises, *(d)* patients' homes and *(e)* other locations.

Mr. Freeman: The figures are not available in exactly the form requested. An estimate of the percentage breakdown of face to face contacts in the year is given in the table.

Speech Therapy Services:
Percentage of face to face contacts by site: 1988-89 England

Type of Location	*Percentage of face to contacts*
Hospital site	24
NHS premises other than a hospital site	30
Local Authority premises	37
Patient home	4
Other locations	5
Total all locations	100

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide statistics on the levels of speech therapy service currently available in each district in the United Kingdom, if work is currently in progress to analyse the levels of service required for districts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The number of speech therapy staff (including helpers) in English district health authorities and the London postgraduate special health authorities at 30 September 1987, (the latest year for which information is available in the form requested) is given in the tables. It is for individual health authorities to assess the level of service required in their area.

Speech therapy (includes helpers)
Whole-time equivalents September 1987

	Number
TOTAL	2,657
Northern	
Hartlepool	5
North Tees	10
South Tees	15
East Cumbria	9
South Cumbria	9
West Cumbria	7
Darlington	7
Durham	12
North West Durham	5
South West Durham	8
Northumberland	16
Gateshead	8
Newcastle	22
North Tyneside	10
South Tyneside	6
Sunderland	12
Yorkshire	
Hull	12
East Yorkshire	10
Grimsby	8
Scunthorpe	6
Northallerton	5
York	10
Scarborough	7
Harrogate	8
Bradford	13
Airedale	10
Calderdale	10
Huddersfield	14
Dewsbury	11
Leeds Western	12
Leeds Eastern	14
Wakefield	8
Pontefract	6
Trent	
North Derbyshire	21
South Derbyshire	30
Leicestershire	39
North Lincolnshire	12
South Lincolnshire	13
Bassetlaw	5
Central Nottingham	19
Nottingham	45
Barnsley	13
Doncaster	14
Rotherham	8
Sheffield	38
East Anglian	
Cambridge	22
Peterborough	15
West Suffolk	11
East Suffolk	16
Norwich	26
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	10
West Norfolk and Wisbech	8
Huntingdon	9

	Number
North West Thames	
North Bedfordshire	13
South Bedfordshire	15
North Hertfordshire	10
East Hertfordshire	12
North West Hertfordshire	15
South West Hertfordshire	10
Barnet	17
Harrow	11
Hillingdon	7
Hounslow and Spelthorne	15
Ealing	18
Brent	20
Paddington and North Kensington	11
Riverside	40
North East Thames	
Basildon and Thurrock	11
Mid-Essex	18
North East Essex	16
West Essex	9
Southend	14
Barking, Havering and Brentwood	20
Hampstead	22
Bloomsbury	29
Islington	9
City and Hackney	18
Newham	22
Tower Hamlets	14
Enfield	8
Haringey	12
Redbridge	9
Waltham Forest	13
South East Thames	
Brighton	18
Eastbourne	11
Hastings	7
South East Kent	9
Canterbury and Thanet	17
Dartford and Gravesend	6
Maidstone	9
Medway	12
Tunbridge Wells	15
Bexley	13
Greenwich	25
Bromley	15
West Lambeth	17
Camberwell	19
Lewisham and North Southwark	27
South West Thames	
North West Surrey	14
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	11
South West Surrey	11
Mid-Surrey	12
East Surrey	9
Chichester	8
Mid-Downs	12
Worthing	12
Croydon	20
Kingston and Esher	13
Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton	14
Wandsworth	19
Merton and Sutton	16
Wessex	
East Dorset	13
West Dorset	9
Portsmouth and South East	28
Southampton and South West	22
Winchester	10
Basingstoke and North Hampshire	9
Salisbury	8
Swindon	15
Bath	16
Isle of Wight	7

	Number
Oxford	
East Berkshire	17
West Berkshire	33
Aylesbury Vale	0
Wycombe	11
Milton Keynes	22
Kettering	15
Northampton	18
Oxfordshire	29
South Western	
Bristol and Weston	29
Frenchay	26
Southmead	18
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	10
Exeter	16
North Devon	6
Plymouth	15
Torbay	11
Cheltenham	10
Gloucester	19
Somerset	24
West Midlands	
Bromsgrove and Redditch	8
Herefordshire	3
Kidderminster	6
Worcester	10
Shropshire	15
Mid-Staffordshire	11
North-Staffordshire	19
South-Staffordshire	12
Rugby	0
North Warwickshire	11
South Warwickshire	19
Central Birmingham	16
East Birmingham	11
North Birmingham	9
South Birmingham	13
West Birmingham	12
Coventry	13
Dudley	18
Sandwell	18
Solihull	10
Walsall	16
Wolverhampton	9
Mersey	
Chester	9
Crewe	14
Halton	7
Macclesfield	11
Warrington	11
Liverpool	24
St. Helens and Knowsley	14
Southport and Formby	6
South Sefton	6
Wirral	13
North Western	
Lancaster	6
Blackpool Wyre and Fylde	17
Preston	14
Blackburn Hyndburn and Ribb	14
Burnley Pendle and Rossend	18
West Lancaster	7
Chorley and South Ribble	4
Bolton	12
Bury	11
North Manchester	14
Central Manchester	15
South Manchester	16
Oldham	10
Rochdale	0
Salford	15
Stockport	20
Tameside and Glossop	16
Trafford	13

	Number
Wigan	19
The Hospital for Sick Children	9
The National Hospital for Nervous Diseases	17
Moorfields Eye Hospital	0
The Royal Marsden Hospital	2
Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's	6

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will provide statistics relating to the percentages of people receiving speech therapy services who have associated mobility problems or a level of social-economic difficulty.

Mr. Freeman: Statistics are not collected in the form requested.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the joint Department of Health-National Health Service manpower advisory group intends to publish its recommendations aimed at improving recruitment and retention patterns in speech therapy; and whether information or statistics on current patterns are at present available.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: It is intended to publish the DOH-MPAG report concerning recruitment and retention in speech therapy by the middle of next year.

Statistics are currently being analysed. When this is complete a clearer picture of current patterns of recruitment and retention will be available.

Mrs. Ray Michie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the results of the study currently under way into the use of speech therapy assistants will be published; and whether his Department intends to issue guidelines following completion of the study.

Mr. Freeman: The research study into the use of speech therapy assistants commissioned by the Department is in its early stages. It is expected to be completed by September 1991, with publication following a few months later. We will consider the results of the study when they become available.

Management Consultants

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on management consultants by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* National Health Service regions and districts in England in each of the years 1979 to 1989; and what quality controls are used by (i) his Department and (ii) the National Health Service to ensure that these expenditures provide good value for money.

Mr. Freeman: We cannot apportion expenditure between the Departments of Health and of Social Security prior to 1985-86. The estimated expenditure for each succeeding financial year from 1985-86 on fees and expenses for management consultants on health matters is as follows:

	£ million
1985-86	0·479
1986-87	2·103
1987-88	1·244
1988-89	1·584

The figures are approximate since expenditure up to and including the 1988-89 year was from a joint health and social security budget. In some cases expenditure has been apportioned where consultants have been engaged on both health and social security matters. The figures also include social services consultancy and some computer consultancy where these cannot be identified separately.

The Department of Health controls and monitors the use of management consultants in line with the requirements laid down from time to time by the Treasury.

The employment of management consultants is a matter for individual health authorities and their accounts do not separately identify any expenditure consequently incurred.

Breast Cancer Screening

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in the light of clinical and economic evidence produced since the publication of the Forrest report on breast cancer screening, what is the current cost/quality adjusted life year estimate for this procedure.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: We understand that work is being carried out, as part of the follow-up to the United Kingdom trial of early detection of breast cancer, on economic evaluation of the early detection of breast cancer. A model is being developed which would provide information on costs and quality adjusted life years.

Old People (Monitoring)

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence he has of the cost-effectiveness of annual monitoring of the over 75-year-olds.

Mr. Freeman: We do not have any precise evidence linking the annual monitoring of people aged over 75 years to outcome costs. We have been happy to accept the advice we have received from a large number of doctors, and other health workers, that a better service can be offered to elderly people, not least in terms of the early identification of health or social problems, through a system of regular monitoring organised by their general practitioner. This proposal builds on a large number of local initiatives of this kind.

Diethylstilbestrol

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is being done to support women who have been exposed to the synthetic hormone diethylstilbestrol.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Resource Management

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the results of his Department's evaluation of the resource management initiative.

Mr. Freeman: The management executive is still discussing certain details of the evaluation with the joint consultants committee.

Dentistry

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Dental Practice Board has completed its survey of full dental provision; if the results will be published; and why his Department commissioned the study.

Mr. Freeman: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Irish Patients

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his assessment of the reasons for patients from the Irish Republic seeking treatment in the United Kingdom.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 28 July 1989]:* Under the relevant EC regulations residents of the Republic of Ireland may seek immediately necessary treatment under the NHS on the same basis as residents of the United Kingdom and may be referred by the Irish health authorities for treatment for specific conditions. Information on the reasons for patients seeking treatment is not available centrally and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Generic Medicines

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many manufacturing sites for generic medicines supplied to the National Health Service are outside the European Community; and how many of these sites have been inspected within the last five years, last two years and last year, respectively.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 23 October 1989]:* Manufacturing sites are not differentiated as generic or proprietary. Products currently licensed in the United Kingdom include those produced at 685 manufacturing sites outside the European Community (EC): some of these sites are within signatory countries of the pharmaceutical inspection convention (PIC).

In the last five years the United Kingdom medicines inspectorate has inspected all manufacturing sites which are actively exporting medicinal products to the United Kingdom for use in the NHS and which are located outside the EC but are not within PIC signatory countries.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many product licences for generic medicines were granted in the years *(a)* 1985, *(b)* 1986, *(c)* 1987 and *(d)* 1988; and how many of the licence applications that received approval were referred to the Committee on Safety of Medicines.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 23 October 1989]:* The information is not available in the form requested. Licences granted for medicinal products are recorded statistically by the Medicines Control Agency according to whether they are new active substances or established drug substances. Product licences granted for established drug substances, including those for products which may subsequently be prescribed generically, are given in the table according to whether or not they were approved by the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM).

Licences granted for established drub substances

Year	Approved by the CSM	Others	Total
1985	78	565	643
1986	85	570	655
1987	60	564	624
1988	52	487	539

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discussions his Department has had with the Food and Drug Administration in the United States of America with specific reference to the licensing of generic medicines;

(2) whether his Department has any intention of categorising generic medicines, licenced by the Medicines Control Agency, into grade A and grade B products similar to the classifications in the orange guide to generics compiled by the Food and Drug Administration of the United States of America;

(3) whether, in view of the corrupt and fraudulent practices related to the submission of falsified data on some generic medicines to the Food and Drug Administration in the United States of America, he has any plans for tightening the procedures for the licensing of generic products by his Department.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 23 October 1989]:* We are aware of the allegations made in the United States of America that fraudulent data had been submitted as part of generic licence applications and officials have been in touch with the Food and Drug Administration. There is no evidence to suggest that the alleged malpractice in the United States of America has affected any of the generic products currently licensed in the United Kingdom but the matter will be kept under close review.

All licence applications, including generic products, must satisfy the strict requirements of the licensing authority as to safety, quality and efficacy of the product concerned before a licence is granted. We therefore have no plans for tightening the licensing procedures or for categorising generic drugs as in the United States of America.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he is taking to ensure that National Health Service patients receiving generic medicines are informed of the name of the manufacturer;

(2) whether he intends to ensure that National Health Service patients will receive generic medicines in the manufacturers' original packs and with patient information leaflets in accordance with the proposed European Community Directive.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 23 October 1989]:* The question of original pack dispensing is under study. A recent European Community Commission consultative paper discussed the question of information for patients about medicines and made specific suggestions about labels and leaflets. However, this document was described as in no way engaging the Commission whom we understood currently to be considering the responses by Governments and outside organisations. It would be premature to make piecemeal commitments on detailed labelling or leaflet requirements before the Commission submits firm proposals for directives on these matters to the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has any plans to ask the public health laboratories to provide laboratory disintegration, dissolution and analytical data in respect of generic medicines that are the subject of product licence applications based purely on data submitted by the manufacturing company.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 23 October 1989]:* The licensing authority has access to the results of tests carried out by the National Health Service quality control laboratories on products purchased by the NHS.

In addition, the licensing authority operates a sampling and testing scheme for licensed products, usually at the medicines testing laboratory. Where relevant, such tests would include disintegration, dissolution and analysis. We have no plans to extend these arrangements.

Northern RHA

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* administrative staff were employed in the Northern regional health authority for each year since 1979; what are the projections for future years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* The information requested is given in the table. Since 1979 the numbers of doctors, nurses and administrative staff employed in the northern region have all increased, at the same time as the workload undertaken has increased significantly. The Government's manpower plan "Hospital medical staffing: Achieving a Balance" aims to bring about a future expansion to the consultant grade at a rate of approximately 2 per cent. per annum. In addition the introduction of "Project 2000" will have a significant impact on the recruitment and skill-mix of staff employed in nursing in the future. Details of manpower projections in the northern region are a matter for the regional health authority.

National Health Service staff in post
Northern regional health authority at 30 September each year

Year	Whole time equivalent[1]		
	Medical and dental[2]	Nursing and midwifery[3]	Administrative and clerical[4]
1979	2,530	23,940	5,940
1980	2,610	25,170	6,100
1981	2,670	26,210	6,160
1982	2,690	26,380	6,090
1983	2,770	26,840	6,220
1984	2,780	26,740	6,310
1985	2,820	27,110	6,120
1986	2,820	27,390	6,260
1987	2,810	27,640	6,490
1988	2,820	27,770	6,710

Source: Department of Health (SM13) annual census of NHS medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] Figures are independently rounded to nearest ten (10) whole-time equivalents.

[2] Includes permanent paid, honorary and locum staff. From 1987 figures also include agency locums.

[3] Includes agency staff.

[4] Includes General Managers.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics or *(e)* could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* I regret that the information requested is not readily available for the Session as a whole. However for the first quarter of the Session, during which a total of 1,395 written answers were given, the information requested is as follows:

	Number
Information not available	23
Information not separately recorded	3
Information not centrally recorded	113
Information not recorded in Government statistics	1
Disproportionate cost	3

There is no reason to suppose that this is not a representative quarter. For the Session as a whole, some 5,600 written answers have been given.

Non-emergency Ambulance Service

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if, pursuant to his statement of 9 November, *Official Report*, column 1219, he will list those areas of the United Kingdom where the non-emergency ambulance service has been adequately replaced by other forms of transport; and what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government for the non-emergency ambulance service in London.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* Health authorities were advised in 1984 that it was open to them to buy in part of the ambulance service if that is more cost-effective and provided that the quality of service is maintained. A number of NHS ambulance authorities are using private contractors, the hospital car service and the voluntary aid societies to transport appropriate NHS patients. The table shows by ambulance authority the number of patient journeys carried out in England in 1987-88 (the last year for which we have figures).

Ambulance authority	Directly provided services	Agency services	Hospital car	Rail	Air	Other	All services England
England	13,276,465	306,836	3,415,560	6,454	266	221,179	17,226,760
Cleveland	197,764	0	0	131	0	313	198,208
Cumbria	210,812	52	36,407	341	3	0	247,615
Durham	256,721	0	2,033	22	0	6,703	265,479
Northumbria Metropolitan	625,171	0	22,258	90	2	32,088	679,609
Humberside	439,221	0	10,129	118	0	0	449,468
North Yorkshire	212,123	0	25,818	132	2	0	238,075
West Yorkshire Metropolitan	814,428	0	80,265	87	0	0	894,780
Derbyshire	287,975	0	2,506	112	1	2,393	292,987
Leicestershire	320,949	0	606	111	0	0	321,666
Lincolnshire	169,487	0	31,136	0	0	0	200,623
Nottinghamshire	378,283	1,926	69,743	0	0	0	449,952
South Yorkshire Metropolitan	493,910	0	9,514	61	0	0	503,485

Ambulance authority	Directly provided services	Agency services	Hospital car	Rail	Air	Other	All services England
Cambridgeshire	80,617	0	111,376	0	0	0	191,993
Norfolk	182,564	0	140,731	325	0	0	323,620
Suffolk	197,491	0	75,938	189	2	0	273,620
Bedfordshire	119,159	0	36,451	0	0	0	155,610
Hertfordshire	260,539	0	21914	0	0	0	282,453
Essex	265,011	0	218,641	3	0	0	483,655
East Sussex	255,920	0	199,465	43	8	0	455,436
Kent	421,259	0	31,758	3	1	0	453,021
Surrey	253,530	0	209,700	6	15	0	463,251
West Sussex	141,262	0	136,953	145	3	0	278,363
London Ambulance Service	1,435,423	120,971	186,686	1,764	21	19,396	1,764,261
Dorset	114,527	0	260,314	51	0	0	374,892
Hampshire	227,881	20,035	232,812	104	3	0	480,835
Wiltshire	45,086	1,061	120,908	12	0	80,133	247,200
Isle of Wight	20,146	876	0	0	0	0	21,022
Berkshire	131,884	0	55,080	15	0	0	186,979
Buckinghamshire	142,373	3,570	36,603	1	0	0	182,547
Northamptonshire	170,596	0	14,398	239	0	0	185,233
Oxfordshire	110,681	0	64,940	7	0	0	175,628
Avon	6,461	0	56,665	39	1	1,243	64,409
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	49,577	373	76,376	449	180	0	126,955
Devon	220,340	0	460,472	346	10	9	681,177
Gloucestershire	147,477	0	74,388	136	0	0	222,001
Somerset	99,934	0	67,748	106	0	0	167,788
Hereford and Worcester	169,849	181	117,260	9	0	0	287,299
Shropshire	101,201	0	35,491	37	0	0	136,729
Staffordshire	262,271	0	11,689	92	0	0	274,052
Warwickshire	96,529	0	4,573	52	0	0	101,154
West Midlands Metropolitan	786,469	125,410	0	440	6	26	912,351
Cheshire	406,997	0	16,186	84	0	0	423,267
Mersey Metropolitan	648,240	0	0	260	4	120	648,624
Lancashire	403,608	0	17,144	122	0	78,392	499,266
Greater Manchester Metropolitan	894,719	32,381	32,485	170	4	363	960,122

The management of the London ambulance service is the responsibility of South West Thames RHA. The arrangements under which it provides a non-emergency service are a matter for that authority in discussion with the other three Thames regions and their district health authorities.

Teaching Hospitals

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what review funding allocation is taking place within his Department as to the cost of research and training by teaching hospital within the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The service increment for teaching (SIFT) will be payable to teaching hospitals to cover the excess costs they incur as a result of supporting undergraduate medical education and research. The level of SIFT was last reviewed in 1988 by the then NHS management board as part of its review of the resource allocation working party formula. We intend to implement in 1990-91 the recommendation, arising from that review, that SIFT should be increased to meet, on average, 100 per cent. of the excess costs of teaching hospitals. The scope and distribution of SIFT will be reviewed again within three years.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Community Charge Rebate

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many community charge rebates it is anticipated will be made at the rates of *(a)* 80 per cent., *(b)* 50 per cent. and *(c)* 20 per cent.; and how these figures have been calculated.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I will write to my hon. Friend about part *(a)* of his question. The information required to answer parts *(b)* and *(c)* of this question is not available and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Civil Service Dispersal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he has any plans to relocate his Department's offices to the north-west of England; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on 14 November at c. *170* to my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick). We decided on Leeds after the most careful consideration of its advantages and those of other possible locations, including several in the north-west.

Spending Power

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish tables using the assumptions in his answer to the hon Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) on 22 June 1988, *Official Report*, columns *571-76* but using expenditure and benefit figures appropriate for families in *(a)* Leeds, West, *(b)* Leeds metropolitan district and *(c)* nationally together with a column showing the extent of the differences resulting from the April 1988 changes.

Mr. Scott: I will write to the hon. Member.

Hardship Payments

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many people aged under 25 years have received discretionary hardship payments from his Department's local offices in Wales since October 1988.

Mr. Scott: Regulation 8(3) of the Income Support (General) Regulations was introduced in April 1988. Under it a person normally required to be available for work in order to receive income support may be excused that requirement, and therefore receive benefit, if he or his family would suffer hardship. Information on the number of people awarded benefit under this provision since October 1988 is not available. Details are being recorded from the start of October 1989 and the first figures will be available at the end of November.

Section 20(4) of the Social Security Act 1986 gives the Secretary of State power to direct that a person aged 16 or 17 may receive income support, when he or she would not ordinarily be entitled, if payment of benefit is the only means of preventing severe hardship. In the period 12 September 1988 to 10 November 1989 a total of 533 applications from the Department's offices in Wales were considered under this provision. In 341 cases (64 per cent.) a direction was given to enable income support to be paid.

Attendance Allowance Board (Chairman)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when the term of office for the current chairman of the Attendance Allowance Board comes to an end.

Mr. Scott: On 18 October 1992.

Christmas Bonus

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security when he intends to announce the pensioners' Christmas bonus for 1989; if he will increase the bonus in line with inflation, since the bonus was first introduced; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he has any plans to increase the Christmas bonus for pensioners.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We have no plans to do so.

Social Fund

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will publish a table of numbers of applications for grants and loans under the social fund that have been rejected in the current financial year at each Department of Social Security office.

Mr. Scott: Information on the numbers of applications processed and awards made is available in the Library. Numbers of applications that have been rejected can be obtained from this information.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will specify the level of the social fund budget for offices covering Peckham in 1990-91.

Mr. Scott: We will make an announcement in due course.

Income Support

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what steps were taken to ensure that income support was paid from 9 October to pensioners who claimed before that date and whose income at the date of claim exceeded the qualifying limit by less than the amount by which the pensioner premium was to be increased.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: An extensive publicity campaign mounted from 9 July invited pensioners to claim income support. All claims made on or after that date by pensioners whose income exceeded the qualifying limit at the date of claim were automatically reconsidered from 9 October. Where appropriate, income support was payable from the payday in that week.

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many persons aged 16 and 17 years had made applications for income support on grounds of extreme hardship, how many had been granted at 3 November by region; and how many at the same dates had been granted income support on grounds of being within exempted categories, by category.

Mr. Scott: The number of applications from 16 and 17-year-olds on grounds of severe hardship and the number of directions given to enable benefit to be paid in the period 12 September 1988 to 3 November 1989 are in the following table:

	Applications received	*Directions given*
London North	1,269	785
London South	1,227	779
Midlands	1,827	1,227
North East	3,794	2,534
North West	2,428	1,540
Wales and South West	1,317	840
Scotland	6,134	4,197
Great Britain	17,996	11,902

Notes:

1. Based on 100 per cent. count of decisions received.
2. Information relates to the number of applications received rather than the number of young people involved. Some individuals may have received more than one direction.

As indicated in the reply to the hon. Member on 26 October at columns *539-40*, the number of 16 and 17-year-olds granted income support because they fall within one of the exempt categories ceased to be collected after October 1988 and could now be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, our monitoring of the changes introduced in July 1989 indicates that between July and September some 2,600 awards of benefit were made to those who qualified under the exempt categories.

Pension Schemes

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what information he has on the existence of any occupational pension scheme in the private sector not covered by contributions.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The rules of an occupational pension scheme specify whether, in addition to the employer, employee members of the scheme are required to contribute to the scheme. It is not a condition for an occupational scheme to be used for contracting-out of the state earnings-related pension scheme (SERPS) that employees pay contributions. There are about 1 million members of non-contributory private sector occupational pensions schemes.

Job Search

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security (1) if he will estimate the additional costs of job search that unemployed people now have to bear in actively seeking work under the Social Security Act 1989;

(2) whether he intends to increase unemployment benefit and income support to cover extra costs incurred by those actively seeking work by introducing a special job search allowance.

Mr. Scott: Unemployed claimants have always been expected to look for work. For the majority of people who have done this, the new condition makes no difference. The cost of job search varies according to circumstances. Some activities cost nothing; many other ways of finding work have a modest cost, for example use of telephones, stationery and postage stamps. The travel-to-interview scheme administered by the employment service is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment.

We have no plans to increase benefit rates as suggested.

Form AG1

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many complaints he has received about social security form AG1; and if he will list the general sources of complaint.

Mr. Scott: Since April 1988 when form AG1 first came into use, some 100 letters have been received from right hon. and hon. Members, mainly about the length and complexity of the form. The letters have referred to representations made by outside organisations, including some professional organisations as well as by individuals. In addition a few complaints have been made direct to the Department.

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what proposals he has to simplify form AG1.

Mr. Scott: A revised version of form AG1 came into use last month. The new version reflects a major overhaul of the form and incorporates improvements to avoid particular difficulties identified from experience of the form in use. Several national organisations concerned with potential users of the form were consulted about the redesign and it was also tested in independent research arranged by the Central Office of Information. Although the dimensions of the form have been slightly reduced, the new version still has the same number of pages since the content is largely governed by the amount of information required to assess claims in accordance with the legislation. Nevertheless, the improvements should make the form easier to complete and more likely to produce all the relevant information and so minimise the need for additional inquiries.

The form will be kept under review with a view to further improvements in the design and content.

Staff Numbers

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will list his most recent estimation of the reduction in his Department's staff numbers in future in Scotland due to the implementation of new technology and operational strategy.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: The staffing reduction flowing from the implementation of the operational strategy in local offices in Scotland is currently expected to be 1,100 posts between 1 April 1989 and 31 March 1992.

This reduction will be party offset by the creation of approximately 470 new jobs at the social security centre in Glasgow as a result of work being transferred from London.

Current forecasts indicate that the reduction will be achieved through natural wastage.

Staff have been assured that there will be no compulsory redundancies resulting from the implementation of the strategy.

National Insurance

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many individuals paid self-employed national insurance contributions in each of the years 1979-80 to 1988-89 inclusive.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard The United Kingdom figures of the number of individuals who paid class 2 (self-employed) national insurance contributions between 1979 and 1988 are set out in the table. Agreed figures for the final year are not yet available for publication.

	Number[2] *(thousands)*	*Number*[3] *(thousands)*
1979-80	1,376	232
1980-81	1,450	211
1981-82	1,479	218
1982-83	1,526	240
1983-84	1,594	251
1984-85	1,663	251
1985-86	1,732	261
1986-87	1,850	295
1987-88[1]	1,871	280

[1] Provisional figures.
[2] Who paid only Class 2 contributions during the year.
[3] Who paid a mixture of Class 2 and Class 1 contributions during the year.

Earnings Rule

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security how many applications his Department has received from people wishing to take up their basic state pension entitlement whilst working under the new earnings rules introduced on 1 October; how many of them have

received their pension; and how many additional whole-time equivalent staff his Department has employed to administer the new entitlement.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: Following the abolition of the earnings rule on 1 October 1989, 99,645* pensioners have claimed their state pension. A total of 72 per cent. (72,435) of those pensioners had been awarded their pension as at 10 November 1989. The estimated administrative cost for this exercise in the year 1989-90 is £12·74 million.

* Note: As at 31 October 1989.

Trainees

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security for what reasons he set the permitted period which applies to trainees after 12 months of employment training at four weeks; and what is the likely permitted period for YTS trainees, including those who have employee status.

Mr. Scott: The period of four weeks during which a person, who has undergone extended training for a particular kind of employment, will be regarded as having good cause for refusing employment different from that for which he has trained takes account of the fact that some ex-trainees will be unable to start work immediately. The appropriate permitted period for all unemployed claimants is determined by the adjudication officer. The decision will take account of the factors listed in the Social Security (Unemployment, Sickness and Invalidity Benefit) Amendment No. 2 Regulations 1989. (SI 1989 No. 1324.)

21-hour Rule

Mr. Loyden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security what effect he expects the actively seeking work clauses of the Social Security Act 1989 to have on people studying under the 21-hour rule provision.

Mrs. Gillian Shephard: We expect the actively seeking employment condition to have similar effects on all unemployed claimants. In determining whether a claimant has taken reasonable steps to seek employment, regard is had to time spent on vocational training or study.

Benefits

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Security whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table on the same basis as that given in the written answer dated 20 March 1987 showing the total benefits paid out to the unemployed in 1987-88, 1988-89 and his forecast for 1989-90, together with payments from the redundancy fund, the percentage both represent of gross domestic product and the revenue from North sea oil.

Mr. Scott: The information requested is shown in the table.

	1987-88 £ million	*1988-89 £ million*	*1989-90 £ million*
Benefits expenditure on the unemployed	[1]6,250	[2]5,430	[3]5,240
Total expenditure from the Redundancy Fund	[1]81	[2]74	[3]71
Total	6,331	5,504	5,311
As percentage of GDP	1·5	1·2	1·0
As percentage of North sea oil revenue	138	172	204

[1] Outturn.
[2] Estimated outturn.
[3] Plans.

SCOTLAND

Cancer Screening

Sir Russell Johnston: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects that a computerised call and recall system will be set up in order to allow all Scottish women to have regular cervical cancer screening in whichever health board area they live.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Public Bodies

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) on 7 December, *Official Report*, column *211*, relating to the records kept of the political affiliations of persons nominated for or appointed to public office, what records or references to persons' political affiliations exist.

Mr. Malcolm Rifkind: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Greater Glasgow Health Board

Mr. Sillars: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when a person resident in Govan constituency was last appointed to Greater Glasgow health board.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Mental Health

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to lay before Parliament the code of practice under section 119 of the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984.

Mr. Rifkind: I am pleased to announce that the code has today been laid before both Houses. It contains important guidance to doctors, nurses and other professions in the care and treatment of those suffering from mental disorder and represents a further important step in enhancing the quality of life for such people.

Nuclear Power Stations (Output)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current monthly output of each reactor at each nuclear power station in Scotland in million tonnes of coal equivalent.

Mr. Lang: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Tobacco Industry (Sponsorship)

Mr. Home Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will seek information from the tobacco industry about sporting events which it intends to sponsor in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The tobacco companies, under a voluntary agreement dating from 1987, already inform the Government, in confidence, of their sponsorship plans for sporting events as they are decided.

Drugs (Ambulance Staff)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions the Scottish Home and Health Department held with representatives of the Scottish ambulance service prior to the establishment of new regulations pertaining to the administration to patients by ambulance crew members of prescription-only drugs; and if he will make a statement about the rationale for his new regulations.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Prison Sanitation

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress made with the introduction of integral sanitation into the prison system and its consequent increase in pressure on prison places.

Mr. Mellor: All prisons built or designed since 1979 have either integral sanitation within the living accommodation or free access to sanitation. At other establishments the introduction of sanitary facilities is proceeding as quickly as possible within physical and financial constraints. Following the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement yesterday, a further £150 million is being provided over the next two years for prison refurbishment. The programme aims to provide over 6,500 cells with sanitation during the next seven years. To achieve this the prison service is using a range of methods which, wherever possible, do not involve the displacement of large numbers of inmates.

Remand Prisons

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish the results of his inquiry into the involvement of the private sector in remand prisons.

Mr. Mellor: In his statement on 1 March this year my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd), at columns 277-78, announced that further studies would be carried out on the likely cost-effectiveness of private remand centres. I am now considering the results of this work and expect to make an announcement soon.

Badgers

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for badger baiting there were in 1988 and 1989.

Mr. John Patten: In 1988 under the Badgers Act 1973 there were 74 prosecutions in England and Wales. Data for 1989 are not yet available.

Rehabilitation of Offenders

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to re-examine the level and type of support offered to ex-offenders to enable their successful rehabilitation and resettlement in the community.

Mr. John Patten: We are currently considering the findings of Lord Carlisle's report on the parole system in England and Wales. These have considerable implications for the supervision, support and resettlement of offenders. We hope to publish detailed proposals, some of them dealing with my hon. Friend's points, in the new year.

Television Licences

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now consider introducing free television licences for pensioners in view of the increase to take place on television licences fees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: No. The House has rejected the idea of free TV licences for pensioners on a number of occasions. The increase in the television licence fee from next April, announced on 31 October, is in line with the increase in the RPI. As announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Security on 25 October, pensions and other state benefits will rise by the same amount.

Drugs

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secrtary of State for the Home Department (1) how many needles or syringes were discovered in prison establishments in England and Wales during *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* so far in 1989;

(2) how many visitors to inmates to prison establishments in England and Wales were found to be in possession of an unlawful drug during the course of a visit in *(a)* 1986, *(b)* 1987, *(c)* 1988 and *(d)* so far in 1989;

(3) on how many occcasions *(a)* cannabis, *(b)* heroin and *(c)* cocaine has been discovered in prison establishments in England and Wales during (i) 1986, (ii) 1987, (iii) 1988 and (iv) to date in 1989.

Mr. Mellor: The following numbers of finds were reported by prison service establishments:

	Cannabis	*Heroin*	*Cocaine*	*Needles*	*Syringes*
1986	1,709	55	17	25	55
1987	1,676	42	18	49	92
1988	2,424	55	32	77	114
[1]1989	2,765	53	42	91	167

[1] To 14 November.

Note: The information requested about visitors is not available.

Pigot Inquiry

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of the Pigot inquiry will be available to the House.

Mr. John Patten: Shortly.

Vagrancy and Begging

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the costs incurred in arresting, detaining and prosecuting young persons in London under the Vagrancy Act 1824, and for each month of 1989 and each year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Wall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been for begging and sleeping out under the Vagrancy Act 1824 as amended by the Vagrancy Act 1985 and the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 in the years 1977, 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988 in the following police authorities: *(a)* Metropolitan police, *(b)* Merseyside, *(c)* Greater Manchester, *(d)* Thames Valley, *(e)* Devon and Cornwall, *(f)* Lancashire and *(g)* West Yorkshire; and if he will give the total for England and Wales.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information held centrally for 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988 is given in the table. To produce such information for 1977 would involve disproportionate cost.

Persons prosecuted for begging and sleeping out under the Vagrancy Act 1824 (as amended) by specific police force area for years 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988
England and Wales

Police force area	Begging					Sleeping out				
	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988
Devon and Cornwall	1	6	—	5	8	—	1	—	—	—
Greater Manchester	10	3	2	—	2	8	3	—	—	—
Lancashire	4	4	—	2	—	4	—	2	2	—
Merseyside	15	7	—	—	9	10	1	—	—	1
Metropolitan police district[1]	851	918	334	416	500	188	45	4	9	12
Thames Valley	31	60	24	13	14	8	1	—	2	1
West Yorkshire	5	9	4	4	1	2	—	—	—	1
England	1,012	1,080	398	462	568	272	67	9	14	16
Wales	1	1	—	4	5	4	—	—	—	1
England and Wales	1,013	1,081	398	466	573	276	67	9	14	17

[1] Including City of London.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will state the number of persons *(a)* fined and *(b)* given custodial sentences arising from prosecutions under the Vagrancy Act 1824 and Metropolitan Police Act 1839 for 1977, 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988 for each police authority area for *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales;

(2) if he will list by police authority area the number of persons held for questioning under the Vagrancy Act 1824 and the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 but subsequently released without being charged per year since 1979.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information on the number of people held for questioning under the Vagrancy Act 1824 and the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 is not collected centrally.

Information held centrally for 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988 on the number of persons fined and given custodial sentences under the Vagrancy Act 1824, as amended, by police force area is given in the table.

Number of Persons sentenced to a fine or immediate custody for the offences of begging and sleeping out under the Vagrancy Act 1824 (as amended) by police force area for years 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988.
England and Wales

Police force area	Fined					Immediate custody				
	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988
Avon and Somerset	—	3	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
Bedfordshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambridgeshire	24	30	7	5	4	3	—	—	—	—
Cheshire	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cleveland	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Cumbria	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Derbyshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Devon and Cornwall	1	4	—	2	4	—	—	—	—	—
Dorset	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Durham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Essex	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gloucester	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Greater Manchester	4	2	2	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
Hampshire	9	8	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—
Hertfordshire	—	2	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Humberside	1	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kent	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Lancashire	3	2	—	3	—	3	—	—	—	—
Leicestershire	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
City of London	7	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Merseyside	10	6	—	—	7	1	—	—	—	—
Metropolitan Police District	576	719	200	246	322	93	6	—	—	—

Police force area	Fined					Immediate custody				
	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988
Norfolk	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Northamptonshire	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Northumbria	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
North Yorkshire	1	—	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	—
Nottinghamshire	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
South Yorkshire	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Staffordshire	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Suffolk	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Surrey	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Sussex	5	3	1	2	3	2	—	—	—	—
Thames Valley	24	51	19	11	8	5	—	—	—	—
Warwickshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Mercia	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
West Midlands	9	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Yorkshire	4	5	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wiltshire	2	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
England	692	842	242	276	357	117	7	—	—	—
Dyfed Powys	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gwent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Wales	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Wales	1	1	—	1	2	2	—	—	—	—
Wales	1	1	—	1	2	2	—	—	—	—
England and Wales	693	843	242	277	359	119	7	—	—	—

Mrs. Golding: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many convictions there have been for begging and sleeping out under the Vagrancy Act 1824 in England and Wales in the years 1977, 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988;

(2) how many convictions there have been for begging and sleeping out under the Vagrancy Act 1824 in the London Metropolitan police district, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Thames Valley, Devon and Cornwall, Lancashire and Staffordshire police districts in the years 1977, 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988.

Mr. John Patten: Information held centrally for 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988 is given in the table. To produce such information for 1977 would involve disproportionate cost.

Persons convicted of begging and sleeping out under the Vagrancy Act 1824 (as amended) by specific police force area for years 1980, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988—England and Wales

Police Force Area	Begging					Sleeping out				
	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988	1980	1983	1986	1987	1988
Devon and Cornwall	1	5	—	4	8	—	—	—	—	—
Greater Manchester	10	3	2	—	1	8	3	—	—	—
Lancashire	4	2	—	2	—	4	—	2	2	—
Merseyside	15	6	—	—	8	10	—	—	—	—
Metropolitan Police District[1]	829	875	319	396	455	185	38	3	9	10
Staffordshire	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—
Thames Valley	26	54	24	11	10	8	1	—	2	1
England and Wales	973	1,015	379	440	512	269	57	8	14	13

[1] Including the City of London.

Birmingham Six

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what locations all the police records of the convictions of the Birmingham Six are held; and whether they are available for inspection by solicitors for the prisoners.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand that all police records relating to the convictions of the Birmingham Six are held by the Devon and Cornwall constabulary on behalf of the West Midlands police, except for the forensic evidence which is held by the Director of Public Prosecutions. It would be for the chief constable of the West Midlands police to decide whether to make any particular document available for inspection, in the light of all the circumstances.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what and how many representations he has received concerning the case of the Birmingham Six; and if he will now refer the case to the Court of Appeal.

Mr. John Patten: Since the case of those convicted of the Birmingham public house bombings was last considered by the Court of Appeal following a reference by my right hon. Friend the Member for Witney (Mr. Hurd), representations proposing that the case be referred again to the Court of Appeal have been received from Members of both Houses of Parliament, representatives of the clergy, representatives of various campaign groups and members of the public.

At present, there are no new grounds on which my right hon. and learned Friend would feel justified in referring this case back to the Court of Appeal, but he is always ready to consider new evidence or other considerations of substance which have not been before the courts and which appear to cast doubt upon the safety of any conviction.

Confessional Evidence

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of conviction on the basis of confessional evidence have been *(a)* received by him,

(b) referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions or police investigation and *(c)* referred to the Court of Appeal each year since 1979.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Offences (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners convicted of offences in Northern Ireland are currently serving sentences in English, Scottish and Welsh prisons; and how many have been returned to Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland to complete their sentences.

Mr. Mellor: The table gives the numbers of permanent transfers of prisoners under section 26(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1961 between England and Wales and Northern Ireland since 1980. Information about how many transferred prisoners are still in custody could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Year	*From Northern Ireland*	*To Northern Ireland*
1980	3	1
1981	2	—
1982	1	—
1983	2	3
1984	3	1
1985	—	4
1986	—	2
1987	—	3
1988	—	10
[1]1989	4	14

[1] To 13 October.

Transfers of prisoners between Northern Ireland and Scotland are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Transfers of prisoners are not possible between the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland as, although the Republic of Ireland has signed the Council of Europe convention on the transfer of sentenced persons, it has not yet ratified it. The United Kingdom ratified the convention in 1985.

Prevention of Terrorism Act

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list for each year since 1974 the number of persons *(a)* interviewed, *(b)* charged and *(c)* convicted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Mr. Waddington: The readily available information on those detained under the prevention of terrorism legislation of Great Britain is published quarterly in Home Office statistical bulletins which are placed in the Library; the latest, issue 36/89, gives information on those detained up to the third quarter of 1989. Information on the outcome of charges following detention under this legislation is published in the end of year bulletins in this series; tables 6 and 7 of issue 3/89 give the figures for those detained over the period of the current legislation. Figures relating to earlier legislation can be obtained from corresponding earlier bulletins in this series.

Republic of Korea

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made applications for visas to enter the United Kingdom during the last five years; and how many were successful.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The information is not available.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons from the Republic of Korea applied for visas to enter the United Kingdom during the last five years; and how many succeeded.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information on applications received in the Republic of Korea for entry clearance to the United Kingdom is not available, but information on applications granted and refused initially is given in the table. Nationals of the Republic of Korea do not need an entry clearance to visit the United Kingdom.

Applications in the Republic of Korea for entry clearance[1] to the United Kingdom

Number of persons

Year	*[2]Applications [3]Granted*	*Refused initially*
1984	570	n/a
1985	770	n/a
1986	540	n/a
1987	360	[4]—
1988	340	60

n/a Not available.

[1] Including applications for a certificate of entitlement to (or, prior to August 1988, a confirmation of) the right of abode in the United Kingdom.

[2] These applications may have been received in an earlier period.

[3] Granted initially or on appeal.

[4] Five or fewer.

Stolen Cars (Deaths)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons have been *(a)* killed whilst driving stolen cars and *(b)* killed by drivers of stolen cars on Merseyside in the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I understand from the chief constable of Merseyside that between 1984 and 1988, 15 persons were killed whilst driving stolen vehicles in Merseyside. During the same period the number of persons killed by drivers of stolen vehicles was 15 (of these, nine persons were occupants of stolen vehicles and six were pedestrians or occupants of other vehicles). In 1989 up to 31 October, three deaths have occurred: two occupants or drivers of stolen cars and one other road user.

Rape in Marriage

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about rape in marriage; what assessment his Department has made of the Scottish law on rape in marriage; whether he will ask the Criminal Law Revision Committee to give further consideration to the issue of rape in marriage; and what plans he has to bring forward legislation to outlaw rape in marriage.

Mr. John Patten: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Private Nurseries

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what guidelines have been issued to the group charged with establishing voluntary accreditation for private nurseries;

(2) what moneys have been allocated to the setting up of the voluntary accreditation scheme for private nurseries;

(3) whether he has agreed the membership of the group to issue voluntary accreditation to private day nurseries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The ministerial group on women's issues, meeting last October, agreed to encourage the establishment of a national association of private nursery providers and childcare consultants which would set up an accreditation scheme for its members. The group has agreed in principle to provide pump-priming finance for the establishment of such an accreditation scheme. Any childcare provider will have to abide by the relevant statutory regulations, at present under the provision of the Nurseries and Childminders Act 1948 and, from 1991, under the Children Bill, which is due to receive Royal Assent today.

Christian Radio

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proposals he has to allow Christian groups to run an independent Christian radio station; and what restrictions he will place on the kind of broadcasting they can undertake.

Mr. Mellor: We are not proposing that religious groups should be prevented from running independent radio stations provided they observe the content requirements envisaged in paragraph 7.7 of the Green Paper "Radio: Choices and Opportunities" (February 1987, Cm. 92).

Guildford Four

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what compensation payments have been paid to Paul Hill, Gerard Conlon, Patrick Armstrong and Carole Richardson in respect of their wrongful imprisonment; when they will receive the final sum; and what it will be.

Mr. John Patten: As I explained in my written answer of 1 November to the hon. Member at column 183, my right hon. and learned Friend agreed that interim awards of compensation should be made to all four, pending a final settlement of their claims. These payments have been made. It is not our practice to publish details of individual payments to applicants for compensation.

The solicitors representing the four persons concerned have been asked to supply any information they wish the independent assessor to take into account when determining the final sum. It is for the assessor to decide what the amount should be and when he has the information he needs to reach a decision. In accordance with the provisions of section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, my right hon. and learned Friend will accept the assessor's recommendation.

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Sir John May commenced work on the inquiry into the conviction of the Guildford Four; who is assessing the evidence with him; if all material presented to him will be available to the solicitors of the four; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Sir John May began work on his inquiry on 26 October 1989. Professor J. C. Smith, CBE, until recently professor at law at Nottingham university, has been appointed as an assessor to the inquiry. We will consider the appointment of further assessors if Sir John feels that this is necessary. The conduct of the inquiry will be a matter for Sir John May and it will be for him to decide the extent to which material presented to him during the inquiry will be made more widely available.

Police Officers (Offences)

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been sent for trial for criminal offences for the years 1980 to 1989 inclusive; and how many have been *(a)* convicted and *(b)* gaoled.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Information relating to the number of officers convicted of criminal offences and the number who received sentences of imprisonment is published annually in the reports of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, copies of which may be found in the Library. Information relating to the number of officers against whom criminal proceedings have been brought, but who have not been convicted, is not available.

DNA Tests

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average length of time it takes for a DNA test to be available in family or criminal matters at Leicester magistrates court.

Mr. John Patten: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Storridge Farm Prison

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the proposed category B prison at Storridge farm in Westbury will now go ahead.

Mr. Mellor: A decision on the Home Office interest in the site at Storridge farm will be taken within the next few weeks.

Firearms Certificates

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Gwent as to his practice on the issuing of temporary shotgun or firearms certificates to the holders of expiring shotgun or firearms certificates when the chief constable has not completed his inquiries prior to the expiry of the existing certificate.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: The Firearms Acts 1968 to 1988 do not provide for the issue of temporary shotgun or firearm certificates. The issue of certificates, and permits under section 7 of the 1968 Act, are entirely matters for chief officers of police.

Summer Time

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of altering British summer time arrangements on traffic.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: Whilst estimates of traffic accidents resulting from changes to summer time have been made by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, it has not been considered practicable to make a detailed assessment of road traffic as such, although likely changed travel patterns have been taken into account.

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of the proposals to alter British summer time on the number of accidents to postal workers.

Mr. Peter Lloyd: I am aware of the figures for accidents to postal workers during the British Standard Time experiment and have recently received representations from the Union of Communication Workers.

Bail Accommodation

Mr. Irvine: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what conclusions he has reached following the consultation process on the consultation paper "Bail Accommodation and Secure Bail Hostels" which was issued on 13 February.

Mr. Waddington: There were 62 responses made to the consultation paper "Bail Accommodation and Secure Bail Hostels". Most respondents pressed for more bail hostel and other accommodation in the community to be provided so that defendants without a fixed address could be bailed instead of being remanded in custody. The Government's current bail accommodation expansion programme aims to deliver 500 new bail places by April 1991. We have decided in addition to examine how low-cost hostels or networks of lodgings could be provided by the voluntary or private sectors; how private sector involvement in provision of bail hostels can be increased; how national standards for bail hostels can be drawn up; and how bail information schemes and accommodation networks can be integrated effectively. We have decided not to embark on the development of secure bail hostels for the time being. We want to see what the impact of this further programme of work aimed at expanding existing accommodation will be. There are other issues still under consideration: the part that hostels can play in a strategy for dealing with mentally disturbed defendants and how hostels can best respond to the needs of ethnic minorities and women.

Prison Boards and Visitors

Mr. Irvine: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in providing prison boards of visitors with the assistance of a qualified clerk at adjudications.

Mr. Mellor: A pilot scheme to provide clerks drawn from the magistrates courts service to assist boards at adjudications began in 13 establishments on 6 November. The scheme will run for one year and be independently monitored throughout to assess both the practicality of this proposal and the extent to which it proves to be of real assistance to boards of visitors. It is our hope that the independence and expertise which court clerks will bring to the adjudicatory process will further improve the quality of justice at disciplinary hearings. In the light of the results of the monitoring of the scheme, we shall wish to reach a view as to the desirability of making similar arrangements in all establishments.

Video Surveillance

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on the extent of video surveillance by the police of the public; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* No central record is held of the use of video surveillance by the police of the public. The police use CCTV in a range of circumstances—for example, for traffic control or in operations against crime. Where such equipment is used its use is subject to guidelines issued by the Home Office in 1984. We are aware of a number of crime prevention schemes around the country which involve the use of CCTV and we understand that in most of these the CCTV equipment is operated by local authorities or private security companies.

Publicity

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library details of each major publicity campaign mounted by his Department in 1985-86 and each successive year, including in each case the objectives of the campaign, the intended audience and the outcome of the monitoring of the achievement of the intended objectives, and national research conducted for him by the Central Office of Information together with a note of the intended objectives in the campaigns in 1989-90.

Mr. Waddington *[holding answer 2 May 1989]:* I have written to the hon. Member and placed a copy of my reply in the Library.

Section II Money

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much section II money has been made available to *(a)* local education authorities and *(b)* other bodies; and for what purposes in the past year, five, 10 and 15 years ago, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten *[pursuant to his reply, 11 July 1989, c. 420]:* I regret that the figures given for the financial years 1977-78 and 1987-88 were incorrect. The correct figures are:

Year	Total Grant £	Education £	Other £
1977-78	24,745,627	20,777,102	3,968,525
1987-88	93,022,000	[1]70,000,000	[1]23,000,000

[1] Approximate.

Prevention of Terrorism

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government have reached a conclusion on their response to the judgment of the

European Court of Human Rights in the case of Brogan and others concerning detention under the prevention of terrorism legislation.

Mr. Waddington *[pursuant to his reply, 14 November 1989, c. 209-10]:* I regret that a typing error occurred at column 210, line 5, which should read
". . . for a period of up to seven days".

Ivory

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what specific steps have been taken by his Department to enforce the ban on the importing of ivory into the United Kingdom; whether there have been any arrests or prosecutions since the introduction of this ban; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: I have been asked to reply.

For many years the importation of ivory has been subject to the need for an import licence or permit issued by the Department of the Environment.

Goods imported without such documents are liable to seizure by Customs so no special measures have been required as a result of the ban. Customs continue to seize consignments of illegally imported ivory.

Most seizures, often involving small quantities, are made locally without reference to Customs headquarters. Statistical information is compiled only periodically. Up-to-date details could be obtained only at disproportionate expense.

WALES

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Ray Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the number of written questions he has answered from each hon. Member representing Welsh constituencies during the current Session; and what estimate he can make of the cost incurred for each hon. Member.

Mr. Peter Walker: The number of written questions answered from each hon. Member representing Welsh constituencies to date during the current Session is shown in the table.

The average cost of a written question is approximately £54. This figure relates to all questions to Ministers, not just to Welsh Office Ministers.

Parliamentary questions answered

Member	*Number*
Donald Anderson, Esq., MP	19
Nicholas Bennett, Esq., MP	105
Alex Carlile, Esq., QC, MP	13
Mrs. Ann Clwyd, MP	59
Donald Coleman, Esq., CBE, MP	4
Rt. hon. Denzil Davies, Esq., MP	8
Ron Davies, Esq., MP	95
Paul Flynn, Esq., MP	36
Rt. hon. Michael Foot, MP	1
Win Griffiths, Esq., MP	24
Geraint Howells, Esq., MP	40
Dr. Kim Howells, MP	47
Roy Hughes, Esq., MP	29
Barry Jones, Esq., MP	315
Gwilym Jones, Esq., MP	39
Ieuan Wyn Jones, Esq., MP	29
Martyn Jones, Esq., MP	18
Richard Livsey, Esq., MP	30
Dr. John Marek, MP	15
Sir Anthony Meyer, BT, MP	8
Alun Michael, Esq., MP	97
Rhodri Morgan, Esq., MP	9
Rt. hon. John Morris, QC, MP	8
Paul Murphy, Esq., MP	10
Ray Powell, Esq., MP	1
Keith Raffan, Esq., MP	7
Allan Rogers, Esq., MP	17
Ted Rowlands, Esq., MP	20
John P. Smith, Esq., MP	1
Dr. Dafydd Ellis Thomas, MP	61
Sir John Stradling Thomas, MP	—
Gareth Wardell, Esq., MP	72
Dafydd Wigley, Esq., MP	105
Rt. hon. Alan Williams, MP	13
Alan W. Williams, MP	16

Housing Subsidy

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the figure for central Government housing subsidies to local authorities during *(a)* 1988, *(b)* 1989, *(c)* 1979 and *(d)* 1983.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is given in the following table and is based on returns made by Welsh local authorities:

	£ million
1979-80	54·8
1983-84	24
1988-89	10·2
1989-90	11

Figures quoted are outturn with the exception of 1988-89 where provisional outturn has been included and 1989-90 where provision has been used.

Significant changes to the subsidy system came into effect in 1981-82 so no valid comparison can be made between the earliest and later years.

Homelessness

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has made of the total cost of keeping homeless people and families in hotel accommodation in Wales.

Mr. Grist: On the basis of the latest information available from local authority revenue outturn returns, gross current expenditure on bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless persons in 1987-88 was £280,000 of which £170,000 was met by local authorities and the remainder from local sources (mainly fees and charges).

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many homeless families there were in Wales in the last year; how many were housed in temporary accommodation; and how many were housed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation.

Mr. Grist: During the period 1 July 1988 and 30 June 1989 a total of 7,730 households were accepted as homeless by local authorities in Wales; 793 households were housed in temporary accommodation. At 30 June 1989, a total of 145 of these were in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many young people in Wales under the age of 25 are

currently homeless; what proportion this is of the under-25 population; and if he will instigate a survey into the causes of homelessness among young people in Wales.

Mr. Grist: This information is not collected centrally. The Department's contacts with organisations concerned with homelessness do not suggest that the causes of homelessness amongst the under-25s are very different from those for the population as a whole.

Food Contamination

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how long it takes on average for the Welsh Office to inform district councils of instances of food contamination; and how many instances of food contamination were recorded in Wales during 1987, 1988 and 1989.

Mr. Grist: In cases of physical contamination of food, where a decision is taken by the Government to issue a general warning to district council environmental health officers, food hazard warning notices are issued as soon as practicable (usually within a few hours) after receipt, by the Department, of the necessary information.

The number of cases of food contamination recorded in Wales is not held centrally.

Water Treatment Works

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales pursuant to his answer of 1 November to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside, *Official Report*, columns *207-8*, if he will list in the *Official Report*, for each water treatment works, the date by which he expects each to comply with the aluminium standard under section 20(5)(b) of the Water Act 1989.

Mr. Grist: The information is shown in the table:

Location and water treatment works	*Compliance date*
Clwyd	
Bylchau	1995
Cynwyd	1995
Glascoed	1995
Meifod	1995
Trecastell	1995
Alwen	1995
Bretton	1992
Cilcain	1993
Dyfed	
Bontgoch	1995
Strata Florida	1990
Bolton Hill	1994
Hotwells	1995
Preseli	1995
Valley Court	1995
Capel Dewi	1990
Bryncoch	1992
Dyfed and West Glamorgan	
Bryngwyn	1991
Felindre	1992
Powys	
Llanwrtyd Wells	1992
Llandeilo Graban	1992
Portis HL	1992
Hereford and Worcester	
Byton	1992
Broomy Hill	1994
Gwent	
Cwmtillery	1995
Nantybwch	1995
Georgstown	1995
Craig Ddu	1995
Rhymney Bridge	1995
Gwent and Mid Glamorgan	
Pontsticill	1995
South Glamorgan and Mid Glamorgan	
Cantref	1995
Llwynon	1995
Mid Glamorgan	
Hendre Bailey[1]	1995
Penderyn BH	1995
Maerdy HL and LL	1995

[1]This supply is currently not in use.

Notes:

Abergynolwen was included in my answer of 1 November in error. When considering whether to accept the undertakings, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State had regard to current medical advice and was satisfied that none of the supplies concerned would represent a risk to public health.

NHS (Backlog Maintenance)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his answer of 30 October to the hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside, *Official Report*, column *35*, what information he has as to the cost of backlog maintenance for National Health Service properties in Wales for *(a)* each hospital and *(b)* each health authority unit; and if he will list those by health authority.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is not held centrally. District health authorities provide an annual return in which the backlog maintenance estimate is shown only as an aggregated total figure for the district. The detail requested could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

School Leavers (Employment)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps will he take to ensure that more employment opportunities can be found for school leavers with learning difficulties in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Government guarantee a place on YTS for all 16 and 17-year-olds who seek one, and the scheme offers those with learning difficulties the opportunity to develop basic skills and achieve recognised qualifications.

The careers service and the employment service provide specialist advice and guidance to all young people with special needs to enable them to find suitable training and/or employment.

Homeless Women

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has on the incidence of anaemia among homeless women in Wales over the past three years.

Mr. Grist: The information is not available centrally.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has any information on how many women who suffered post-partum haemorrhages during the last three years were homeless.

Mr. Grist: The information is not available centrally.

Lead Contamination

Mr. John P. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the incidence of lead contamination on farms in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: Restriction orders have been placed on the movement of milk and animals from some 200 farms in Wales to which supplies of contaminated feed have been traced. Milk from these farms is being segregated from supplies for public consumption and samples are being taken for testing. Results from the tests will be published as soon as they are available. Given the circumstances of the contamination further detailed tests are being conducted to identify other contaminants which might be associated with lead. Indications are that the maximum possible intake of lead from this incident does not represent a hazard to human health.

Primary Schools

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the cost of primary schools with *(a)* fewer[1] than 20 pupils, *(b)* fewer than 30 pupils, *(c)* fewer than 40 pupils, *(d)* fewer than 50 pupils, *(e)* fewer than 60 pupils, *(f)* 60-99 pupils, *(g)* 100-149 pupils and *(h)* 150-1,999 pupils for each Welsh local education authority, for the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information requested is not held centrally.

Earnings

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to average male weekly earnings in each Welsh district or travel-to-work area.

Mr. Peter Walker: Recent information is available only for counties and sub-divisions from the Employment Department's new earnings survey which gives the following information for April 1988:

Average male gross weekly earnings[1]

	£
Clwyd	222·0
Clwyd West[2]	196·5
Clwyd East[3]	231·7
Dyfed (excluding Llanelli)	200·4
Gwent	218·8
Gwynedd	204·0
Mid Glamorgan	221·5
Powys	191·2
South Glamorgan	224·9
West Glamorgan (including Llanelli)	220·7
Wales	217·8

[1] Full-time males on adult rates, whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.
[2] Colwyn, Glyndwr and Rhuddlan districts.
[3] Alyn and Deeside, Delyn and Wrexham Maelor.

Figures for April 1989 are to be published on Thursday 23 November 1989.

Opencast Coal, Bannel Bridge

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will visit the proposed opencast coal site of the opencast executive at Bannel bridge, Clwyd; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: No.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet residents of the Bannel bridge area, Clwyd to hear their views concerning the application of the opencast executive to mine coal in the vicinity of their community; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: It would not be appropriate for Ministers to discuss with the residents a planning application which may come before the Secretary of State for Wales.

Rechem

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will detail the amount of PCBs in the consents from Welsh Water for Rechem to discharge into the Ponthir treatment works near Pontypool; and if he will summarise the results for 1988 and 1989 of tests carried out on the aqueous effluent by Welsh Water.

Mr. Grist: The consent granted to Rechem International Ltd. to discharge effluent to the Ponthir sewage treatment works includes a maximum concentration of 5 microgrammes per litre of polychlorinated biphenyls (a level which is lower than that normally present in human blood). The average concentration of PCBs in the effluent in the 42 samples taken and analysed by the Welsh water authority from March 1988 to September 1989 was less than half the maximum admissible level.

Ward Closures

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the intended closure of wards in several major hospitals in Gwent, mid Glamorgan, Clwyd and east Dyfed from Christmas day until after the new year weekend.

Mr. Grist: Arrangements for the provision of hospital services over the Christmas period are operational matters for the district health authorities concerned.

Council House Sales

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the total of each local authority's council house sales, by authority, since 1979, giving the number of council houses in current local authority possession to the latest date; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The information requested is shown in the table:

	Sales[1]	*Provisional estimates*[2]
Aberconwy	1,411	2,826
Alyn and Deeside	1,457	5,213
Arfon	1,134	5,015
Blaenau Gwent	1,712	10,422
Brecknock	1,229	2,834
Cardiff	6,451	20,168
Carmarthen	1,093	3,554
Ceredigion	1,185	3,475
Colwyn	737	2,631
Cynon Valley	1,209	5,351
Delyn	1,607	4,750
Dinefwr	700	2,590
Dwyfor	310	1,461

	Sales[1]	Provisional estimates[2]
Glyndwr	1,063	2,984
Islwyn	3,297	6,128
Llanelli	2,901	6,946
Lliw Valley	1,487	5,203
Meirionnydd	769	2,080
Merthyr Tydfil	1,856	6,863
Monmouth	1,969	4,963
Montgomeryshire[3]	1,238	2,973
Neath	1,985	5,653
Newport	3,555	13,452
Ogwr	3,877	9,756
Port Talbot (Afan)	2,953	6,110
Preseli	1,807	5,829
Radnorshire	497	1,171
Rhondda	553	4,991
Rhuddlan	753	2,722
Rhymney Valley	3,075	10,117
South Pembrokeshire	789	2,873
Swansea	2,989	17,382
Taff,Ely	3,171	7,535
Torfaen[4]	5,703	13,830
Vale of Glamorgan	2,969	6,317
Wrexham Maelor	2,306	16,096
Ynys Mon	1,199	5,732
Wales	72,996	237,996

[1] Of local authority dwellings May 1979 to April 1989.
[2] Of local authority stock April 1989.
[3] Excludes dwellings in Newtown.
[4] Includes dwellings in Cwmbran. Records of sales in Cwmbran are only available since 31 March 1980.

Council House Building

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what measures he will take to boost council house building in areas of tourist activity; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: It is for local authorities to determine how best to use the resources available to them, taking account of local needs and seeking to achieve value for money.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Cambodia

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement as to how aid is provided through United Nations agencies in Cambodia and where, and to whom, it is distributed; and if he is satisfied that food supplied by the agencies is reaching only those for whom it is intended.

Mrs. Chalker: The international community provides aid in Cambodia through the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and in the Cambodian refugee camps on the Thai border through the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO).

The UNHCR concentrates on small-scale reintegration projects for returned refugees. UNICEF concentrates on humanitarian programmes in Cambodia. In the refugee camps UNBRO administers directly and through voluntary agencies programmes to provide food, water, shelter, relief supplies, health and social services, primary education and adult literacy to over 300,000 refugees. We have assurances from UNBRO that the aid supplied benefits those for whom it is intended by the donors.

My predecessor made clear to those concerned that Britain's financial contribution should go only to people in those camps occupied by the non-Communist elements of the Cambodian resistance. We received assurances from UNBRO that this stipulation was observed. However, in view of recent allegations, I am reiterating the conditions of our contributions.

Eastern Europe

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how assistance to eastern Europe will be administered and financed.

Mrs. Chalker: The administration of British assistance to eastern Europe will be undertaken by a newly established joint unit within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office comprising staff from both the diplomatic wing and the Overseas Development Administration. My hon. Friend the Minister of State gave details of the £25 million to be provided for Poland in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) on 18 October. It has now been decided that provision for expenditure in 1989-90 and subsequent years will be sought in the overseas aid vote (Class II, Vote 5) and the other external relations vote (Class II, Vote 2). The provision in the overseas aid vote will be from resources outside and additional to the aid programme, and identified separately in the public expenditure White Paper and the Supply Estimates.

Development Aid

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the individual amounts granted to United Kingdom non-governmental organisations by the European Community in 1988 *(a)* for projects in developing countries, *(b)* for development education and *(c)* other.

Mrs. Chalker: Under its NGO programme the European Community co-finances projects in developing countries and development education projects with European NGOs. Normally the Community contributes 50 per cent. of the costs of individual projects. In 1988, the latest year for which figures are available, amounts granted to United Kingdom NGOs were as follows:

(a) For projects in developing countries

	£
Accord	141,307
Action Aid	456,231
Biblelands Society	239,568
Christian Aid	474,996
Concern Universal	54,784
Cooperation For Development	541,550
Commonwealth Trade Union Council	127,847
Echo	25,803
Health Unlimited	126,019
Help the Aged	238,178
International Boys Town Trust	118,191
International Christian Relief	140,479
International Extension College	239,401
Intermediate Technology Development Group	44,939
Leonard Cheshire Foundation	228,507
Marie Stopes International	481,729
Methodist Church	152,401
Namibia Refugees	20,000
Order of St. John	127,391
Opportunities for Women	18,638
Oxfam	718,313

	£
Population Concern	326,873
Richmond Fellowship	82,661
Save The Children Fund	151,783
Scottish Education and Action For Development	19,209
SOS-Sahel International	332,804
Tear Fund	23,333
UK Foundation For People Of The South Pacific	17,088
United Nations Association—United Kingdom	86,127
Voluntary Service Overseas	205,286
War on Want	982,651
Water Aid	32,298
World University Service—United Kingdom	122,883
TOTAL	7,099,268

(b) For development education	£
Birmingham Development Education Centre	50,513
Catholic Institute of International Relations	9,091
Centre For World Development Education	77,695
Christian Aid	119,561
International Broadcasting Trust	79,887
Mayday Publication	47,846
National Association For Developing Education Centres	200,369
Namibia Support Committee	112,014
One World Centre	7,694
Voluntary Service Overseas	16,627
Women Working Worldwide	28,839
	750,136

(c) Other

In addition Christian Aid and Oxfam received funding for projects in consortium with other European NGOs.

The total grants amounted to £2,579,811.

Development Aid

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the non-governmental organisations associated with overseas development which received financial support from his Department in 1988-89, the total sum received by each organisation in that year and the breakdown of the total sum received by each organisation to show separately the sums received *(a)* under the joint funding scheme, *(b)* for emergency relief and *(c)* other.

Mrs. Chalker: The information requested is as follows:

ODA grants to NGOs 1988-89

Agency	*JFS*	*Emergencies (Disasters Refugees Food Aid)*	*Others*	*Total*
ACAFESS (Afro Caribbean Community Organisation)	130,130	—	—	130,130
Acord	255,500	627,991	274,427	1,157,918
Action Aid	253,361	751,066	303,668	1,308,095
Action Around Bethlehem	—	—	27,550	27,550
Action on Disability and Development	97,163	—	—	97,163
Action Water	10,000	—	—	10,000
Afghanaid	—	1,313,580	—	1,313,580
Africa Now	10,300	—	—	10,300
Aga Khan Foundation	195,183	—	1,364,857	1,560,040
Appropriate Health Resources and Technologies Action Group (AHRTAG)	131,039	—	337,715	468,754
Aid for India	20,826	—	—	20,826
African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF)	182,541	—	—	182,541
Avon Industrial Award Scheme	5,000	—	—	5,000
Band Aid	—	169,953	—	169,953
Boston—Jalchatra Project	—	—	12,000	12,000
Boys Brigade	15,349	—	—	15,349
British Airways Trust	48,500	—	—	48,500
British Executive Services Overseas	—	—	300,006	300,006
British Red Cross Society	16,797	1,697,582	—	1,714,379
British Refugee Council	—	6,000	—	6,000
CAB International (Commonwealth Mycological Institute)	—	—	57,437	57,437
Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD)	625,000	3,189,990	—	3,814,990
Care Britain	394,949	2,752,509	991,946	4,139,404
Centre for Economic Policy Research	—	—	49,827	49,827
Centre for World Development Education	—	—	135,000	135,000
Christian Aid	1,375,000	3,620,561	438,000	5,433,561
Christian Outreach	—	189,103	—	189,103
Christians Abroad	—	—	17,000	17,000
CIIR	49,673	—	945,000	994,673
Commonwealth Human Ecology Council	50,013	—	—	50,013
Concern	39,202	1,093,668	4,581	1,137,451
Council For Education in World Citizenship	—	—	6,500	6,500
Council Of Europe North South Campaign	—	—	30,000	30,000
Co-operation For Development	205,884	—	338,700	544,584
Commonwealth TUC	51,020	—	—	51,020
Cusichaca Project	32,155	—	—	32,155
Disasters Emergency Committee	—	2,106,700	—	2,106,700
Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme	5,000	—	—	5,000
Equipment for Community Hospitals Overseas	6,307	—	—	6,307

Agency	JFS	Emergencies (Disasters Refugees Food Aid)	Others	Total
Food and Agriculture Research Mission	12,514	—	—	12,514
Friends of Urambo and Mwanhala	13,672	—	—	13,672
Hand In Hand	17,636	—	—	17,636
Health Unlimited	48,175	—	—	48,175
Help the Aged	43,013	156,890	—	199,903
Homeless Trust	153,137	—	16,100	169,237
International Council for Bird Preservation	37,570	—	—	37,570
International Institute for Environment and Development	—	—	55,000	55,000
Institute of Development Studies	—	—	1,262,000	1,262,000
Intercare	9,732	—	—	9,732
International Bee Research Association	—	—	29,600	29,600
International Boys Town Trust	21,621	—	—	21,621
International Extension College	—	198,200	—	198,200
International Medical Relief	—	14,500	—	14,500
International Committee of the Red Cross	—	610,000	—	610,000
Intermediate Technologies Development Group	22,562	—	1,880,000	1,902,562
International Voluntary Service	14,886	—	760,000	774,886
King Mahendra Trust	14,750	—	—	14,750
Leonard Cheshire Foundation	57,691	—	—	57,691
Leprosy Mission	25,030	—	—	25,030
Lifeline	—	—	9,842	9,842
Ludhiana British Fellowship	—	—	4,763	4,763
Marie Stopes International	194,699	—	—	194,699
Namibia Refugee Project	10,000	—	—	10,000
National Children's Home	11,000	—	—	11,000
National Council of YMCA	—	62,500	—	62,500
Ockenden Venture	21,862	238,874	—	260,736
Operation Raleigh	—	—	3,530	3,530
Order of St. John	—	—	140,000	140,000
Overseas Development Institute	—	—	715,203	715,203
OXFAM	2,555,000	5,091,413	76,385	1,722,798
Panos Institute	—	—	79,551	79,551
Parkes Foundation	3,000	—	—	3,000
PLAN (Foster Parents Plan/World Family)	126,250	—	—	126,250
Plunkett Foundation	—	—	9,000	9,000
Population Concern	190,739	—	—	190,739
Quaker Peace and Service	—	112,000	13,382	125,382
Ranfurly Library Service	—	—	77,880	77,880
Regional Conference on International Voluntary Service	—	—	4,300	4,300
Richmond Fellowship	13,000	—	—	13,000
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind	153,336	50,000	—	203,336
Royal Society	—	—	112,000	112,000
Rural Development Consultancy for Christian Churches in Africa (RURCON)	25,750	—	—	25,750
Ryder Cheshire Mission	—	23,000	—	23,000
Salvation Army	7,000	—	—	7,000
Sandy Gall Afghan Appeal	—	100,000	—	100,000
Save The Children Fund	1,925,000	2,721,444	1,569,430	6,215,874
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund	107,252	—	—	107,252
Scottish Education and Action for Development	—	—	6,000	6,000
The Scout Association	21,092	—	—	21,092
Send a Cow	34,500	—	—	34,500
SOS Sahel International	49,557	—	—	49,557
Special Projects in Christian Missionary Areas	—	23,608	59,831	83,439
St. John Ambulance	8,721	—	—	8,721
Tear Fund	64,713	26,500	—	91,213
Tree Trust	11,130	—	—	11,130
Uganda Society for Disabled Children	212,386	—	—	212,386
United Kingdom Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific	24,860	—	—	24,860
UN Association International Service	—	—	490,000	490,000
UNICEF	—	500,000	50,000	550,000
UNIPAL	—	12,500	—	12,500
Urban Aid	20,000	—	—	20,000
Voluntary Service Overseas	13,031	—	8,681,533	8,694,564
War on Want	—	290,065	49,643	339,708
Water Aid	447,172	—	—	447,172
Women's Corona Society	—	—	34,000	34,000
Women's Environmental Network	—	—	10,000	10,000
Work Start Overseas	36,156	—	—	36,156
World Press Centre	—	—	45,000	45,000
World University Service	19,244	471,218	—	490,462
World Vision	189,776	1,179,315	—	1,369,091
Worldwide Fund for Nature	368,690		52,200	420,890

Agency	JFS	Emergencies (Disasters Refugees Food Aid)	Others	Total
Y-Care International	77,040	110,000	25,000	212,040
You and Me		27,550	—	27,550
YWCA	—	2,300	50,485	52,785
Zimbabwe Trust	28,075	—	—	28,075
Total	11,667,912	29,540,580	22,005,872	63,214,364

Note: These figures exclude the United Kingdom share of grants to British NGOs through the EC.

Non-governmental Organisations

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the non-governmental organisations to which he will be making grants under the joint funding scheme in 1990 and the amount of grant that will be paid to each non-governmental organisation concerned.

Mrs. Chalker: Grants under the joint funding scheme are recorded by financial year rather than calendar year. The non-governmental agencies which will receive grants under the joint funding scheme this financial year, 1989-90, and the amount of grant they have been offered are:

ODA joint funding scheme (JFS) grants to British NGOS 1989-90

Agency	1989-90 grant £
Acord	450,000
Action Aid	399,923
Action Water	10,000
Action on Disability and Development	147,825
Africa Now	9,213
Aga Khan Foundation	278,314
Appropriate Health Resources and Technologies Action Group (AHRTAG)	140,733
Aid for India	52,215
Alternative for India Development	47,145
African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF)	201,179
Anti-Slavery Society	40,945
APT Design and Development	23,650
Boys Brigade	15,000
British Red Cross Society	106,280
Busoga Trust	33,333
Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD)	1,000,000
Care Britain	847,799
Christian Aid	1,700,000
Commonwealth Human Ecology Council	28,266
Child to Child	8,000
Catholic Institute for International Relations	127,688
CONCERN	133,998
Conservation Foundation	112,537
Co-operation for Development	195,641
Commonwealth TUC	124,552
Cusichaca Project Trust	37,000
Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme	77,000
Food and Agriculture Research Mission	40,799
Feed The Minds	13,330
Foundation of Nursing Studies	48,200
Hand in Hand	16,000
Harvest Help	48,125
Health Unlimited	173,353
Help the Aged	129,978
Homeless International	39,500
International Agricultural Training Programme	47,180
International Council for Bird Preservation	82,500
Impact Foundation	10,250
India Development Group	30,000
Intercare	9,732
Intermediate Technology Development Group	188,996
International Trust for Nature Conservation	3,897
International Voluntary Service	69,103
Jalchatra Project	7,500
Joe Homan Trust	33,180
King Mahendra Trust	14,750
Leonard Cheshire Foundation	86,936
Leprosy Mission	15,000
Living Earth	61,400
Money for Madagascar	3,000
Marie Stopes International	507,754
National Children's Home	16,257
Northumbrian Energy Workshop	13,500
Opportunities for Women	58,056
OXFAM	3,100,000
Passe-Partout	33,713
Plan UK (Foster Parents Plan/World Family)	190,553
Population Concern	357,568
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind	137,683
Reed Charities	100,000
Richmond Fellowship	13,200
Save the Children	2,400,000
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)	75,348
Semi-Arid Lands Training Centre (SALTLIC)	28,789
Send a Cow	9,250
SOS Sahel International	76,848
St John Ambulance	53,914
Tear Fund	65,600
Traidcraft Exchange	27,267
TRAX Program Support	31,943
Uganda Society for Disabled Children	212,743
United Kingdom Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific	95,794
Urban Aid	15,000
VETAID	15,500
VSO	9,000
Water Aid	654,699
WomanAid	27,221
World University Service	14,913
World Vision	237,565
Worldwide Fund for Nature	1,000,000
Y-Care	79,707
Zimbabwe Trust	128,500

EMPLOYMENT

Key Training

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment in which year his Department first paid fees to Key Training of 10 Eaton place, Reading.

Mr. Nicholls: Key Training Ltd. commenced operations in February 1985. The Training Agency has paid fees under contract continuously since then.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what contracts, and for what purpose, his Department currently has with Key Training Ltd. of 10 Eaton place, Reading.

Mr. Nicholls: Key Training Ltd. is currently in contract with 15 area offices of the Training Agency to deliver YTS training. In addition the company is in contract with three area offices to deliver employment training.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the sum total of fees by his Department in each of the last five years to Key Training Ltd. of 10 Eaton place, Reading.

Mr. Nicholls: Fees paid to Key Training Ltd., for 1987-88, 1988-89 and projected figures for 1989-90 are as follows:

	£
1989-90	5,682,323
1988-89	6,008,053
1987-88	5,790,692

Aggregated figures are not available for fees paid prior to April 1987.

Health and Safety Executive

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much was spent by the Health and Safety Executive on publicising availability of the registers of all improvement and prohibition notices in health and safety area offices, for the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Nicholls: There has been no direct expenditure on publicising the additional registers of enforcement notices with public safety implications set up at area offices of the Health and Safety Executive under the provisions of the Environment and Safety Information Act 1988 which came into force on 1 April 1989. Athough the Act made no provision for paid publicity, the executive has dealt with large numbers of inquiries from the media and secured extensive free publicity for both the new and pre-existing registers as part of its continuing task of publicising the Health and Safety Commission's publicly declared policy of openness.

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the level of funding to the Health and Safety Executive with responsibility for Wales for each year since 1975, expressed at 1975 prices.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* Funding provision for the Health and Safety Commission and Executive is not made separately for Wales.

Workplace Inspectors

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the total numbers of workplace inspections conducted by the factory inspectorate in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1975.

Mr. Nicholls: The information is not available in the form requested for the years 1975 to 1984. The table shows the number of preventive inspection visits carried out by the factory inspectorate in Wales and Great Britain since 1 April 1985:

Date (1 April-31 March)	*Wales*	*Great Britain*
1985-86	5,000	90,081
1986-87	4,843	94,308
1987-88	4,376	100,815
1988-89	4,618	201,141

The Health and Safety Executive does not enforce health and safety legislation in Northern Ireland.

Allied Colloids (Accident)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will ensure that a copy of the Health and Safety Executive report into the recent explosion at Allied Colloids, Low Moor, is placed in the Library; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list all towns in *(a)* the north-west regions and *(b)* Merseyside which have full employment.

Mr. Nicholls: There is no recognised level of full employment.

Trainees

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what follow-up there is of an employment training trainee who leaves before three months without giving a reason.

Mr. Nicholls: All trainees leaving employment training from April this year are sent a follow-up questionnaire. This asks a number of questions including whether they have found a job or entered other training.

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if a trainee who leaves an employment training scheme without having a job, other scheme or college place to go to, is eligible immediately for unemployment benefit.

Mr. Nicholls: Anyone who leaves an ET or other scheme and is entitled to unemployment benefit can start to receive it from the day after any training allowance ends. If entitlement to UB is not established, or has previously been exhausted or disallowed, income support may be payable.

Economic League

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many recent complaints or inquiries he has received from individuals and employees on the activities of the Economic League.

Mr. Nicholls: Over the last six months my Department has received three letters about the activities of the Economic League.

Closed Shop

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give the number of complaints per year from employees on the closed shop, from 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Benefit Offices (Staffing)

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will announce plans to review staffing levels in unemployment benefit offices to take account of the increased workload imposed by the actively seeking work rules that became effective from October 1989;

(2) if he will implement the 1988 report of unions, management and Treasury, which recommended that staffing levels in unemployment benefit offices be increased.

Mr. Nicholls: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Unemployed Persons

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he will announce plans to improve the quality of service given to the unemployed.

Mr. Nicholls: My Department, through the employment service, provides a comprehensive range of services aimed at helping people find jobs or increasing their chances of doing so. These are regularly reviewed and from time to time my right hon. Friend announces proposals for improving them.

Training

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many employment training trainees are currently on placement in *(a)* Wimpey and *(b)* Sainsburys in each of the Training Agency area offices in London;

(2) if he will estimate the level of expenditure on employment training by each of the Training Agency area offices in London in 1989-90 and 1990-91;

(3) what correlation there is between the level of supplementary grant and the location of schemes in urban programme areas;

(4) what is the level of supplementary grant currently paid to training managers by each area office of the Training Agency.

Mr. Nicholls: I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Disabled People (Qu...s)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the various grants for which employers may apply in order to facilitate the employment of disabled people; and if he will indicate in each case the *(a)* amounts allocated by his Department and *(b)* the amounts taken up by employers in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Eggar *[pursuant to his reply, 8 November 1989, c. 655]:* I regret that the information given in a table on the adaptations to premises and equipment scheme was incorrect due to an error in transposing figures. The correct information is as follows:

My Department provides a variety of help to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities, including six special schemes to help overcome specific barriers to work. Two of these offer grants to employers:

(a) The Job Introduction Scheme—grants towards an individual's wages during a trial period.

(b) the Adaptations to Premises and Equipment Scheme —grants to employers to adapt their premises or equipment to enable a specific disabled employee to work more effectively and productively.

The other four offer help directly to individuals. Money is allocated to the special scheme as a bloc, and expenditure on any one scheme is not constrained by estimates for that scheme; these are based each year on previous take-up and other evidence of likely demand.

Between 1979-80 and 1988-89, total expenditure on all the special schemes for the disabled rose from £743,000 per annum to £5,669,000 per annum.

The financial information requested about the two schemes is as follows:

Job introduction scheme

Year	*Expenditure estimate* £	*Actual expenditure* £
1979-80	334,000	297,201
1980-81	457,000	269,433
1981-82	425,000	354,588
1982-83	531,500	439,861
1983-84	571,000	567,980
1984-85	646,000	659,000
1985-86	760,000	674,000
1986-87	837,000	574,000
1987-88	920,000	619,000
1988-89	609,000	614,000

Adaptations to premises and equipment scheme

Year	*Expenditure estimate* £	*Actual expenditure* £
1979-80	330,000	50,000
1980-81	381,000	64,233
1981-82	150,000	71,469
1982-83	177,000	107,334
1983-84	208,000	134,412
1984-85	150,000	243,649
1985-86	250,000	295,000
1986-87	450,000	256,000
1987-88	480,000	404,000
1988-89	354,000	423,000

YTS, Seaham and Peterlee

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many 16 and 17-year-olds, by sex, are currently denied benefit for not taking up the offer of a place on a youth training scheme within the Seaham and Peterlee areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I have been asked to reply. The information is not collected because refusal to take up the offer of a place on a youth training scheme need not, of itself, deny benefit to 16 and 17-year-olds.

The Secretary of State has the power to direct that, where unavoidable hardship would result if benefit were to be withheld, a young person will be entitled to income support even though that young person would ordinarily not be so entitled.

Each case is considered on its merits. Factors which are taken into account are the young person's health and vulnerability, including the threat of homelessness; the availability of any income or savings; the prospects of a speedy entry into YTS; the availability of casual work; whether the person has any friends or relatives who could

put him or her up or otherwise offer assistance; and the financial commitments of the person and the prospects of postponing such payments, for example of a hostel charge.

ENERGY

Oil and Gas (North Sea)

Mr. Andrew Welsh: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his latest estimates for expansion of exploration and development of oil and gas in the Scottish sector of the North sea.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his latest estimates for expansion of exploration and development of oil and gas in the Scottish sector of the North sea.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his latest estimates for expansion of exploration and development of oil and gas in the Scottish sector of the North sea.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Sillars) on 13 November, at column *99*.

Coal Imports

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the level of coal imports to Britain; what it was 10 years ago; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Coal imports into the United Kingdom were 12.0 million tonnes last year and 2·4 million tonnes in 1978.

Over two thirds of total coal imports in 1988 were of coking coal and anthracite, both of which are now in short supply in this country.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what further proposals he has to improve energy efficiency in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Improving energy efficiency is primarily a matter for individual consumers. The Energy Efficiency Office will continue to provide help and guidance to consumers, and to encourage the energy efficiency industry and buildings professions.

North Sea Development

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the present rate of North sea development.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on 13 November, at column *99*.

Energy Sources

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what consideration he will give to non-economic considerations, such as pollution and safety, when evaluating the cost-effectiveness of coal and nuclear energy in relationship to renewable energy;

(2) whether, in calculating the cost of nuclear and renewable sources of energy, he intends to take into account the cost of commissioning a nuclear power installation and the long-term cost-effectiveness of renewable energy.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The choice of fuel for electricity generation will be for the market to decide, bearing in mind statutory requirements relating to pollution and safety and the non-fossil fuel obligation.

Nuclear Energy (Price)

Mr. Alton: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he intends to make a statement on the price of nuclear energy to be paid by private electricity companies; and when he intends to lay orders before the House.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Contracts for the sale of nuclear electricity are for negotiation between the nuclear generation company and the area boards, and will be subject to Government approval. The contracts for nuclear electricity must be signed before vesting. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State also intends to lay before the House an order under section 32 of the Electricity Act 1989 before vesting.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what consultation he has had with the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board regarding the management of the nuclear power stations subsequent to vesting day for the electricity supply industry;

(2) what consultations he had had with the chairman-designate of National Power for the management subsequent to vesting day of the Sizewell B *(a)* construction project and *(b)* nuclear power station;

(3) what consultations he has had with the chairman-designate of PowerGen regarding agency arrangements for the management of the nuclear power stations of *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Great Britain after vesting day under the Electricity Act;

(4) what consultations he has had with the chairman-designate of National Power about the management structure of the nuclear power stations of *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Great Britain as a whole after vesting day under the Electricity Act;

(5) what consultations he has had with the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board regarding agency arrangements for the management of the nuclear power stations of *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Great Britain as a whole subsequent to vesting day under the Electricity Act;

(6) what consultations he has had with the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board regarding the future chairmanship of the board responsible for the management of the nuclear power stations of *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Great Britain after vesting day under the Electricity Act;

(7) what consultations he has had with the chief executive of the Central Electricity Generating Board regarding the future *(a)* ownership and *(b)* management of the proposed Hinkley Point C pressurised water reactor nuclear power station subsequent to vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act;

(8) what consultations he has had with the chairmen of *(a)* British Nuclear Fuels Ltd and *(b)* the United

Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority regarding the future management and ownership of the nuclear power stations of *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Scotland;

(9) what consultations he has had with the staff of the nuclear power stations about their future management after vesting day of the electricity supply industry;

(10) what proposals he has for the future management of the Sizewell B *(a)* construction project and *(b)* power station;

(11) what proposals he has for the management of the nuclear power stations of England and Wales after vesting day in the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the statement my right hon. Friend made to the House on 9 November at column 1175. My right hon. Friend and I have held discussions on the issues with the chairmen of National Power and the Central Electricity Generating Board, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority, and British Nuclear Fuels Ltd, and with representatives of the staff.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of the number of pressurised water reactor nuclear power stations to be constructed in England and Wales starting before the year 2000.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's statement to the House of 9 November at column 1175.

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy at which nuclear power station sites there have been site emergency plan exercises over the past 10 years; when these exercises took place; what level of exercise they were designated; whether reports of the exercises are available; which exercises tested the concept of extendability; which non-electricity board organisations were involved; whether members of the public were involved in or notified of the exercises; and which nuclear power station sites are due to have their site emergency plans exercised in the next three years.

Mr. Michael Spicer: United Kingdom nuclear power stations have exercised their site emergency plans every year since the station started operations.

These exercises are now classified at three levels: level 1, which comprises annual tests at each site of on-site emergency arrangements and emergency services; level 2, held every two or three years at each site, which also test the off-site arrangements and involve the local authorities and emergency services, regulatory bodies and Government Departments; or level 3, when one of the level 2 exercises is raised to national or level 3 status, and which involves full participation of local organisations, police, emergency services and central Government Departments. These exercises are witnessed by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate (HMNII) and appropriate reports are made available to relevant parties.

Many of these exercises, at level 2 and 3, are based on an assumed radioactive release going significantly beyond that which could arise from the reference accident (ie the accident which although unlikely, has the greatest off-site consequences that can be reasonably predicted, given the design of plant, its protective systems and its operating limits). Generally level 2 and level 3 exercises involve the participation of external organisations which include HMNII, the National Radiological Protection Board, Government Departments, local authorities, health authorities, the police and emergency services. There has been some limited public participation in some of these exercises. Local community liaison councils are made aware of both the programme and the outcome of exercises. For the future, each site will hold at least a level 1 exercise annually, with higher-level exercises continuing to take place with the same frequency as at present.

AGRs

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what consultations he has had with James Capel and Co., stockbrokers, regarding the impact on public Exchequer proceeds of withdrawal of the advanced gas-cooled reactors from the sale of the generating companies under the terms of the Electricity Act.

Mr. Michael Spicer: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has had discussions from time to time with his advisers on electricity privatisation on a wide range of matters. All such discussions are confidential.

Electricity Supply Industry

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the balance sheet assets and liabilities of the Central Electricity Generating Board to be transferred to *(a)* National Power, *(b)* PowerGen, *(c)* the National Grid Company and *(d)* any further residual company owning the nuclear power stations after vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 14 November at column *139*.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the net effect to the Exchequer of the sale of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: It is too early to estimate the likely proceeds from the sale of the electricity supply industry and hence it is not possible to give an estimate of the effect on the public Exchequer.

Nuclear Levy

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most up-to-date estimate of the level to be set for the nuclear levy in each of the first three years after vesting day under the terms of the Electricity Act.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The level of the fossil fuel levy will depend upon the prices for fossil and non-fossil generated power, which are in the process of negotiation.

Energy Conservation

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he has any proposals to improve incentives for energy conservation schemes.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Shersby) on 13 November at column *17*.

Coal Imports, North-East

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the tonnage of coal imported into the ports of Seaham, Sunderland, Hartlepool and Teesside, by month, during 1989.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The latest information is shown in the table. Imports into Seaham are not identified separately but are recorded under the port of Sunderland. Imports into Teesside are recorded under the port of Middlesbrough.

1989 — *Thousand Tonnes*[1]

Month	*Sunderland*	*Hartlepool*	*Middlesbrough*
January	23	16	103
February	31	6	276
March	38	11	206
April	45	5	430
May	23	4	176
June	50	4	72
July	10	10	—
August	26	2	165
September	2	14	457
Total[2]	249	72	1,885

[1] Figures are rounded independently and a total may therefore differ from the sum of its constituent parts.
[2] January to September 1989.
Source: Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (port of entry basis).

Insulation

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the change in the level of Government spending in real terms from 1983-84 to 1988-89 on *(a)* draught-proofing, *(b)* cavity wall insulation, *(c)* double glazing, *(d)* heating controls, *(e)* loft insulation and *(f)* external wall insulation.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Government expenditure on draughtproofing homes through the Community insulation programme rose from £6·7 million in 1983-84 to £44·1 million in 1987-88 (both sums at 1987-88 prices). The figures for 1988-89 are not available.

Expenditure on loft, cold water tank and pipe insulation through the homes insulation scheme fell from £32·6 million in 1983-84 to £9·9 million (provisional) in 1988-89 (both sums at 1988-89 prices).

In addition, there have been other Government-funded programmes in the housing sector which have included expenditure on insulation measures, but for which a breakdown in the form requested is not available.

Efficiency

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received from the Association for the Conservation of Energy concerning Government spending or energy efficiency measures, and what response he has made.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My right hon. Friend has received letters from the association and will be meeting its chairman in the near future.

CEGB (Druridge Bay)

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether land owned by the Central Electricity Generating Board at Druridge bay will be transferred to National Power or the proposed new nuclear company.

Mr. Michael Spicer: In accordance with section 66 of the Electricity Act 1989 the transfer of land assets is, in the first instance, a matter for the CEGB.

Hinkley Point C

Mr. Michael: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will make it his policy that local authorities in south Wales shall be reimbursed from Government funds for the costs they incurred in opposing the Hinkley Point C proposal.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Most objectors appear at inquiries to defend their own interests. That is perfectly proper, but there is no reason why they should be funded from public funds.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. William Powell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the yield from capital gains tax in the current year if it was charged at a single rate of the standard rate of income tax.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Horses (VAT)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to secure the harmonisation of value added tax on *(a)* race horses and *(b)* all other equines dead or alive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: In discussions on the completion of the single market, the Government have made clear their view that market forces would bring about the harmonisation of tax rates to the extent necessary.

Tax Treaty

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will indicate how far discussions proceeded on the preparation of a new tax treaty with the Netherlands Antilles before the decision was taken not to undertake a new treaty; what were the terms of such a revised treaty which were agreed prior to the abandonment of negotiations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Discussions at official level about a new double taxation convention between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands Antilles commenced in May 1987. These discussions and subsequent talks were the subject of Inland Revenue press releases dated 1 July 1987, 24 June 1988, 16 March 1989 and 19 October 1989. The Government considered the position reached in these

discussions and decided that in all the circumstances a satisfactory basis for a new convention did not exist. This was announced on 19 October 1989. The terms of the draft text which formed the basis for discussions between the United Kingdom and the Netherlands Antilles remain confidential. There are no immediate plans to hold further discussions.

Tax Allowances

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the tax allowances currently operative;

(2) what is the total cost of tax allowances for each of the years since 1979;

(3) which tax allowances have been abolished since 1979.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Incomes and Inflation

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the average percentage increase in incomes, including tax reductions, over the past three years; and what has been the rate of inflation in the same period.

Mr. Lilley: Annual estimates of personal disposable income and the consumers' expenditure deflator (the appropriate measure of inflation in this context) may be found in tables 4.1 and 1.7, respectively, of the "United Kingdom National Accounts, 1989"; a copy of which is available in the Library. The average annual increases over the three years 1985-88 (the latest for which figures are available) are:

Average annual compound rate of increase (percentage) 1985 to 1988

	Per cent.
Personal disposable income	8·6
Consumers' expenditure deflator	4·4
Real personal disposable income	4·0

Earnings

Sir Peter Hordern: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing how many people earned *(a)* less than £5,000, *(b)* between £5,000 to £10,000, *(c)* between £10,000 to £13,000, *(d)* between £13,000 to £17,500, *(e)* between £17,500 to £27,000 and *(f)* over £27,000 in 1988-89, and in each of the four previous years.

Mr. Lilley: Estimates for the latest four years available from the survey of personal incomes are shown in the table. The survey's coverage of incomes below £5,000 is incomplete. The estimates cover earned income (including income from self-employment) but employees' earnings are net of superannuation.

Total earned income £	*1984-85* *Thousand*	*1985-86* *Thousand*	*1986-87* *Thousand*	*1987-88* *Thousand*
5,001 to 10,000	10,900	11,100	10,600	10,400
10,001 to 13,000	2,320	2,760	3,230	3,600
13,001 to 17,500	1,150	1,470	1,920	2,350
17,501 to 27,000	609	743	1,020	1,310
Over 27,000	238	306	428	553

Manitoba Wheat

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the highest import levy and the lowest import levy on Manitoba wheat in the last 12 months; and on what dates they were in effect.

Mr. Ryder: In the period from 1 November 1988 to 30 October 1989 the highest rate of import levy on Manitoba wheat (CN Code 10 01 90 99) was £89·0721 per metric tonne. This rate applied for one day only: 7 December 1988. Over the same period the lowest rate of levy was £70·2926 per metric tonne. This rate applied for two days: 17 and 18 August 1989.

Maize

Sir Richard Body: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the highest import levy and the lowest import levy on maize in the last 12 months; and on what dates they were in effect.

Mr. Ryder: In the period from 1 November 1988 to 30 October 1989 the highest rate of import levy on maize (CN Code 10 05 90 00) was £103·4049 per metric tonne. This rate applied for three days: 5 to 7 August 1989. The lowest rate of levy over the same period was £79·9057 per metric tonne. This rate applied for one day only: 31 December 1989.

Mortgage Tax Relief

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total cost of mortgage tax relief *(a)* for each of the years since 1979 and *(b)* for each of the last four months or quarters for which figures are available.

Mr. Lilley: The total cost of mortgage interest relief for each year since 1979-80 and the monthly repayments to lenders under the mortgage interest relief at source (MIRAS) scheme for July to October 1989 are given in the table. The monthly MIRAS figures exclude the costs of excess over basic rate relief and relief for loans outside the MIRAS scheme.

Annual cost of mortgage tax relief

Year	*£ million*
1979-80	1,450
1980-81	1,960
1981-82	2,050
1982-83	2,150
1983-84	2,780
1984-85	3,580
1985-86	4,750
1986-87	4,670
1987-88	[1]4,800
1988-89	[1]5,400
1989-90	[1][2]7,000

[1] Provisional.
[2] Assuming current mortgage interest rate.

Monthly repayments under Miras scheme

1989	*£ million*
July	445
August	540
September	460
October	445

Blue Circle Industries

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received in the last 12 months from Blue Circle Industries plc or its wholly owned subsidiaries concerning the sterling/lira exchange rate; and what reply he gave.

Mr. Ryder: My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has received no such representations in the last 12 months.

Building Societies Commission

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are employed by the Building Societies Commission expressed as full-time equivalents.

Mr. Ryder: A total of 42 people employed by the Registry of Friendly Societies work directly for the Building Societies Commission. A further nine common service staff are currently working primarily or wholly for it. Other common service staff provide varying degrees of support to both the commission and the central office of the registry.

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff of the Building Societies Commission are *(a)* solicitors, *(b)* barristers and *(c)* legal executives.

Mr. Ryder: The legal support for the Building Societies Commission is provided by the common services legal branch of the Registry of Friendly Societies, which comprises two solicitors and two barristers; there are no legal executives.

Capital Investment

Ms. Quin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table of capital investment in real terms, by standard planning region, showing the percentage increase this sum represents from May 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 November, at columns *281-82*. Constant price estimates are not made, because there are no regional price indices.

Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the responsibilities of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies.

Mr. Ryder: The chief registrar is responsible in that post for:

- the public registry for mutual organisations registered under the Building Societies Act 1986, Friendly Societies Act 1974 and the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965;
- the prudential supervision of friendly societies and credit unions;
- the general supervision of the setting up and operations of industrial and provident societies;
- arbitration in certain disputes between members and registered societies, between savers and the Department for National Savings and between individual policy holders and assurance companies (in his capacity as Industrial Assurance Commissioner);
- as Accounting Officer, the Registry of Friendly Societies Vote (Class XIX Vote 3) which covers the expenditure of the Registry in support of the Building Society Commission and the Registrars.

He is also chairman and first commissioner of the Building Societies Commission.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for how long the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies is appointed; and when the current contract comes up for renewal.

Mr. Ryder: The Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies holds his office during the pleasure of the Treasury, and subject to normal Civil Service conditions of service.

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer who appoints the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies.

Mr. Ryder: The Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies is appointed by the Treasury.

OECD Statistics

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will indicate in the *Official Report* the average annual level of inflation in each Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country for each of the past five calendar years for which figures are available;

(2) if he will indicate in the *Official Report* the average level of economic growth in each Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country for each of the past five calendar years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ryder: I refer my hon. Friend to the OECD publication "Economic Outlook", June 1989, where the information requested is set out.

Central Banks

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he has any plans to discuss the status of central banks at the next Ecofin meeting;

(2) if he will list in the *Official Report* those Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries whose central banks are independent of central Government.

Mr. Ryder: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to discuss the status of central banks with the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board and the president of the West German Bundesbank.

Mr. Ryder: I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the Letter in the Library.

Investment

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what is the percentage rate of growth of investment for each year from 1985 to 1989 in *(a)* manufacturing industry, *(b)* the property sector, *(c)* other production industries and *(d)* service industries;

(2) what is the percentage rate of growth of investment in fixed assets for each year from 1985 to 1989, exclusive of all firms transferred from the public sector to the private sector during the period in *(a)* manufacturing industry, *(b)* property industry, *(c)* other production industries and, *(d)* service industries;

(3) what is the percentage rate of growth of investment in fixed assets for each year from 1985 to 1989 in *(a)* manufacturing industry, *(b)* property industry, *(c)* other production industries and *(d)* service industries.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 7 November 1989]:* Data for gross domestic fixed capital formation by industry group are available in table 13.7 of "United Kingdom National Accounts" 1989 edition. Figures for calendar year 1989 are not yet available. For reasons of confidentiality, no estimates are available which allow for the reclassification of industries between the public and private sectors. Data for some industrial groups are not available in 1988. The reasons for this are given in the methodological notes of the "United Kingdom National Accounts".

Figures for growth in investment by property companies are not available in this table. They are set out in the table for the three years up to 1987 (the last for which figures are available). Though growth of property companies investment was rapid, its weight in total business investment is small. Excluding property companies' investment, and after allowing for the re-phasing of investment caused by the 1984 corporation tax reform, business investment still rose rapidly over this period, reflecting the success of this Government's policy in restoring profitability and business confidence.

Annual percentage growth, 1985 prices

	1985	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
Property companies' fixed investment[1]	8	40	75	n/a

[1] Excluding new dwellings and purchases less sales of land and existing building.

Civil Servants (Salaries)

Sir David Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants are currently receiving annual salaries in excess of those received by *(a)* the Prime Minister, *(b)* Cabinet Ministers, *(c)* Parliamentary Under-Secretaries and *(d)* Back-Bench honourable Members of Parliament.

Mr. Ryder: *[holding answer 13 November 1989]:* It is not possible to provide exact figures. Approximate figures are as follows:

Office	*Current salary[1] (as at 1 January 1989)*	*Approximate numbers of non-industrial civil servants earning in excess of column (2) (as at 1 August 1989)*
(1)	(2)	(3)
Prime Minister	[3]64,257	50
Cabinet Minister		
Commons	52,627	60
Lords	41,997	380
Parliamentary Under-Secretary		
Commons	36,367	1,120
Lords	30,647	6,000
Member of Parliament	24,107	13,200

[1] Includes the reduced Parliamentary salary of £18,148 where appropriate.
[2]SIP as at 1 July 1989 around 567,000.
[3]The Prime Minister only accepts the same salary as a Cabinet Minister in the Commons.

Trades Unions

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *526*, what conditions he imposed on any trades unions during recent pay negotiations in respect of recommending offers to their members.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]*: It is for the unions concerned to make their recommendations to their members on whatever basis they think appropriate.

Civil Service Pay

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *525*, if he will seek the consent of parties to the publication of the results of the survey of data on private sector pay and Civil Service comparisons.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* No.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *526*, what steps he has taken to assess the relative importance of pay among the factors which affect morale in the Civil Service; and how this assessment has informed his negotiations.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* No formal assessment has been made.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *525*, what considerations of public policy are served by his decision to refuse to disclose the results of the survey of data on private sector pay levels and Civil Service comparisons.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* It would not be appropriate to publish the information as it is confidential to the parties.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for

Edinburgh, South of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *525*, what information he has concerning the publication of confidential information relating to a survey of data on private sector pay levels and Civil Service comparisons in any FDA bulletin to its members; and what action he intends to take to establish whether a breach of confidence has occurred.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* The bulletin has been seen. No action is planned.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *526*, what representations he has received from the FDA concerning the validity of the results of the survey of data on private sector and Civil Service pay levels.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* The interpretation of the survey information was one of the issues discussed with all the unions concerned in the negotiation of the recent pay settlement for grades 5 to 7.

Private Sector Pay

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South of 7 November, *Official Report*, column *525*, what steps he has taken to secure the agreement of the relevant trades unions to the publication of the results of the survey of data on private sector pay.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* None.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions were asked of his Department in 1988-89.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* To date this Session, the figures for questions directed to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor are as follows:

	Number
Oral	1,560
Priority written	889
Ordinary written	980

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many written parliamentary questions he refused to answer in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* None.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many written parliamentary questions to him in Session 1988-89 received answers that the information *(a)* was not available, *(b)* was not separately recorded, *(c)* was not centrally recorded, *(d)* was not recorded in Government statistics and *(e)* could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* This information is a matter of public record in the columns of the *Official Report*.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the cost to his Department of answering parliamentary *(a)* oral and *(b)* written questions in the parliamentary Session 1988-89.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* Based on the estimated average cost of answering oral and written questions, which currently stands at £90 per oral and £54 per written, the cost to date has been *(a)* £128,610, *(b)* £94,338.

Exchange Rate Mechanism

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the effect on different sectors of the United Kingdom economy of linking the £ sterling to the deutschmark within the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system;

(2) whether the Government have considered the effect which locking sterling into the ERM of the EMS would have on United Kingdom trade in manufactures; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the percentage increase in the volume of imports and output between 1973 and 1979, 1973 and 1988 and 1985 and 1989 to date in textiles, footwear, clothing, metals, metal goods net, motor vehicles and mechanical engineering, together with the figures for import penetration from the EEC for manufactures generally.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The Government have made no such assessment. The available figures for the percentage increases in import volumes and output in United Kingdom manufacturing industries are as follows:

Percentage changes

	Output		*Import volumes*	
	1979-85	*1979-87*	*1979-85*	*1979-87*
Metals	−15·4	−8·1	−0·7	11·3
Metal goods nes.	−18·5	−16·0	37·8	63·6
Mechanical engineering	−14·9	−17·1	18·3	28·7
Motor vehicles and parts	−24·6	−20·5	18·6	28·6
Textile industry	−19·1	−15·3	29·7	49·3
Footwear	−20·2	−18·8	34·0	49·4
Clothing, hats and gloves	0·1	−0·1	16·8	60·5

Data on EC countries' imports of manufactures are published in OECD's "Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade". Data on manufacturing output in EC countries are published in OECD's "National Accounts" and can be expressed in the same currency (United States dollars) as the import figures using data from OECD's "International Financial Statistics".

Currency Policy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to oppose moves by other members of the EEC to adopt a common currency managed by a common central bank without United Kingdom participation.

Mr Ryder *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* The United Kingdom Government are playing a full part in discussions about the future economic and monetary arrangements throughout the Community. The Government do not accept stages 2 and 3 of economic and monetary union as recommended in the Delors report and have proposed an alternative approach.

Statistics

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has discontinued *(a)* the collection or *(b)* the publication of any statistics since 1979.

Mr. Ryder *[holding answer 14 November 1989]:* Changes in the basis of compilation, presentation and publication of statistical series are made from time to time in response to the requirements of Government and international organisations for statistical information. Other changes reflect changes in administrative systems on which some series are based, the development of new statistical techniques and technological developments affecting the compilation and dissemination of statistical data.

When such changes are made they are fully documented in the relevant statistical publications.

Mr Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for France and Italy the increase in real interest rates and in the trade-weighted relative export-unit values of the franc and the lira against the deutschmark since the first quarter of 1979, together with the increase in production, in the numbers unemployed and in the trade deficit with Germany in manufactures; and if he will provide similar figures for the United Kingdom;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for trade in manufactures in 1970, 1988 and 1989 to date *(a)* the percentage of United Kingdom exports of manufactures which goes to the EMS countries, *(b)* the ratio of imports to exports, and *(c)* the balance of trade in manufacturers in current and 1989 prices;

(3) if he will include in the *Official Report* a table showing for the United Kingdom, France and Italy the real rate of interest each year since 1979 as measured by the excess of the rate of interest over the rate of increase in *(a)* prices and *(b)* earnings.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* I regret that it has not been possible to provide an answer before Prorogation. Therefore, I shall write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Tax Relief

Sir Ian Gilmour: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish figures setting out the direct revenue costs, in the latest year for which the figures are available, including estimates for 1989-90, of the following: *(a)* each of the main personal income tax allowances, *(b)* mortgage interest relief, *(c)* life assurance premium relief, *(d)* empoyee's contributions to occupational pensions, *(e)* employers' contributions to occupational pensions, *(f)* retirement annuity premium relief, *(g)* relief on investment income of occupational pension funds and *(h)* relief from national insurance contributions in respect of minimum contribution to personal pension schemes.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 15 November 1989]:* Available information for 1989-90 is as follows.

The direct revenue cost of the main personal allowance is estimated to be £27·2 billion. The costs of mortgage interest relief and life assurance premium relief are estimated to be £7 billion and £360 million respectively. The former assumes that the mortgage interest rate remains at the level in November for the remainder of 1989-90.

Estimates for the cost of allowances and reliefs at 1988-89 levels of income are given in the table. All estimates are provisional and subject to revision.

Cost of tax allowances and reliefs

	£ million
Married man's allowance	13,100
Single person's allowance	8,700
Wife's earned income allowance	3,300
Election for separate taxation of wife's earnings	310
Age allowances	380
Mortgage interest relief[3]	5,500
Life assurance premium relief (where insurance contract made before 14 March 1984)[1]	480
Employee's contributions to occupational pensions[2]	1,700
Employer's contributions to occupational pensions[2,3]	2,600
Contributions to personal pensions (including retirement annuity premia and FSAVCS)[2,3]	425
Investment income of occupational pension schemes[2,3]	4,400

[1] Including the cost of deductions at source for non-taxpayers.

[2] The total cost of tax reliefs for pension schemes cannot be calculated by adding together the costs of the individual reliefs as this would imply a considerable degree of multiple taxation.

[3] On the basis that under present arrangements employers' contributions are not taxable as a benefit in kind of the employee.

[4] It is not possible to provide more detailed estimates or reliable estimates of the cost of exempting investment income and lump sum payments related to retirement annuity contracts.

[5] Assuming relief at the basic rate of income tax.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Namibia

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many detainees were discovered when the Clarke mission visited the SWAPO camp at Kwanza Sul in Angola; and whether UNTAG has subsequently ensured their return to Namibia to vote in the current elections provided for under the United Nations plan.

Mr. Waldegrave: The United Nations mission on detainees found no detainees in any of the alleged detention centres it visited in Angola.

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Clarke mission to investigate SWAPO camps in Angola and Zambia; and if he will list those camps visited.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have noted the report's findings. The United Nations mission visited 22 locations in Angola, including Minya camp, Old Hainyeko camp, Ethiopia camp, Lenin camp and the vocational training centre in Kwanza Sul. It also visited eight locations in Zambia, including Nyanko camp near Kaomo.

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the total United Nations contribution to SWAPO; on what criteria the contribution has been made; and how much has been the United Kingdom contribution to this total.

Mr. Waldegrave: The United Nations has financed certain travel and accommodation costs for SWAPO since

1977. The budget for this purpose for the biennium 1988-89 was $1,006,000. The United Kingdom contributed 4·86 per cent. of the United Nations regular budget in 1988-89. SWAPO has also benefited from projects run by the Council of Namibia and other United Nations bodies. United Nations funding of SWAPO was terminated on 1 April.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what political and financial support the Government is prepared to give the United Nations to assist in the discharge of the responsibilities of any Namibian constituent assembly.

Mr. Waldegrave: We are making a substantial financial and material contribution to the United Nations transition assistance group whose role will continue until independance. The costs of the constituent assembly will be met by the existing Administration.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what support the Government will give to the Secretary General of the United Nations in his efforts to provide assistance to Namibia in the period between elections and independence.

Mr. Waldegrave: We fully support the secretary general's efforts to mobilise assistance to Namibia in the period between elections and independence. We already provide assistance to Namibia bilaterally and through the European Community and the Commonwealth.

Refuseniks

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about the case of Tatiana Futoryanskaya of Moscow and her daughter Ilana;

(2) what representations have been made to the Russian authorities about the case of Andre and Irene Itkina Yershov of Kharkov and their daughter.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have not previously raised these particular cases with the Soviet authorities but we shall be ready to do so if my hon. Friend will provide the details.

Drug Smuggling (Bahamas)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the Bahamas; whether the question of illegal drugs was raised; and if he will make a statement on aid to the Bahamas to combat drug smuggling.

Mr. Sainsbury: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not met Bahamian Government representatives, but my hon. Friend the then Minister of State, Home Office, had constructive meetings in May with Prime Minister Pindling about the threat from cocaine. In the last two years we have provided £66,000 of assistance to reinforce the Bahamas' capability to combat drug trafficking.

East Timor

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will seek to persuade the United Nations to establish an inquiry into allegations of torture and disappearances during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor.

Mr. Sainsbury: No.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met Amnesty International to discuss the Indonesian occupation of East Timor; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Amnesty International has raised the question of human rights in East Timor with us in the course of regular contacts at official level. We are thus aware of its concerns and take careful note of its reports.

Germany

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the reunification of Germany.

Mr. Maude: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 13 November.

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government regarding the lands formerly occupied by Germany and now recognised as belonging to Poland.

Mr. Waldegrave: We give de facto recognition to those parts of Poland's borders established at the Potsdam conference in 1945. We welcomed the treaty of 1970 between Poland and the FRG, including its provisions which related to Poland's western frontier.

China

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have made to China concerning human rights.

Mr. Maude: Following the events of June, the Presidency made a number of representations to the Chinese authorities stressing the concern of the Twelve at the repression in China. On 27 June the European Council issued a declaration which requested the Chinese authorities to respect human rights. Within the United Nations system we raised our concerns about human rights in China in the July meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. My right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs also raised the situation in China in his speech to the United Nations general assembly on 27 September.

South Korea

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Government of South Korea concerning human rights abuses.

Mr. Sainsbury: None. Since President Roh assumed office in February 1988 we have been pleased to note a substantial improvement in the Republic of Korea's human rights record.

Hong Kong

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the hon. Members who have visited Hong Kong at the invitation of the Hong Kong Government in each of the last three years.

Mr. Maude: The list for the current and three previous financial years is as follows:

1986-87
Full Sponsorship
Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth (Ex-Stockton, South)
Mr. Jack Dormand (Ex-Easington)
Mr. David Alton (Mossley Hill)
Mr. George Roberston (Hamilton)
Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham)
Mr. David Atkinson (Bournemouth East)
Mr. Donald Anderson (Swansea, East)
Mr. Robert Jackson (Wantage)

Partial Sponsorship
Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton)
Mr. Hugh Dykes (Harrow, East)
Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith)
Mr. Brynmor John (Ex-Pontypridd)

1987-88
Full Sponsorship
Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham)
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones (Watford)
Dr. Jeremy Bray (Motherwell, South)
Mr. Jerry Wiggin (Weston-Super-Mare)
Mr. Michael Neubert (Romford)
Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)
Mr. Alan Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed)
Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South)
Dr. John Marek (Wrexham)
Mrs. Virginia Bottomley (Surrey, South-West)

Partial Sponsorship
Rt. Hon. Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent, South)
Rt. Hon. Alfred Morris (Wythenshawe)
Mr. James Hill (Southampton, Test)

1988-89
Full Sponsorship
Sir Russell Johnston (Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber)
Rt. Hon. John Smith (Monklands, East)
Mr. Andrew MacKay (Berkshire, East)
Mr. Stuart Randall (Kingston upon Hull, West)
Mr. Timothy Yeo (Suffolk, South)
Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid Kent)

April-October 1989
Full Sponsorship
Rt. Hon. Gerald Kaufman (Gorton)
Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Blaker (Blackpool, South)
Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley)
Sir Hal Miller (Bromsgrove)
Mr. Tony Blair (Sedgefield)
Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock (Batley and Spen)
Mr. Andrew Mitchell (Gedling)
Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye)
Mr. William Powell (Corby)

Partial Sponsorship
Mr. Robert Wareing (Liverpool, West Derby)
Mr. Timothy Yeo (Suffolk, South)

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the cost to the Hong Kong Exchequer for *(a)* fares and *(b)* hospitality for visiting hon. Members in each of the last three years.

Mr. Maude: The cost to the Hong Kong Government of these visits for this and the three previous financial years is as follows:

	1986-87	*1987-88*	*1988-89*	*April-October 1989*
	HKD	*HKD*	*HKD*	*HKD*
Full sponsorship	(8)	(10)	(6)	(9)
(a) Air fare	200,542	312,327	180,128	288,000
(b) Hospitality (including hotel)	127,527	126,512	80,396	89,533
Partial sponsorship	(4)	(3)	(Nil)	(2)
(a) Hospitality (including hotel)	27,119	26,577	Nil	17,585
Total	355,188	465,416	260,524	395,118

Note: Figures in brackets denote the number of Members of Parliament.

Under the Hong Kong Government's visits programme, a number of Members of Parliament are offered fully sponsored visits to the territory each year—both air fare and hotel accommodation are provided. In addition, a number of Members of Parliament who pass through Hong Kong and agree to undertake a programme of visits are offered partial sponsorship, ie hotel accommodation only.

Albania

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if there are any plans to resume diplomatic relations with Albania; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Our 1980 offer to establish diplomatic relations without pre-conditions remains open, but the Albanian Government have unfortunately not taken it up. Officials from the FCO have held talks with Albanian officials with a view to resolving the problems which have hindered the establishment of diplomatic relations, most recently in 1988. No agreement was reached, but we should be happy to continue discussion with the Albanian Government if this seemed likely to lead to a mutually satisfactory outcome.

State Recognition

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria are adopted by Her Majesty's Government in recognising a sovereign state.

Mr. Salisbury: The normal criteria that we apply for recognition as a state are that it should have, and seem likely to continue to have, a clearly defined territory with a population, a Government who are able of themselves to exercise effective control of that territory, and independence in their external relations. Other factors, including some United Nations resolutions, may also be relevant.

Republic of Korea

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's present relations with the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Sainsbury: Our relations with the Republic of Korea are excellent. We look forward to the further strengthening of relations during the visit of President Roh Tae-woo later this month.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if there are any plans to recognise the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: We have no plans to recognise North Korea.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries in east and west Europe maintain diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Sainsbury: The following countries in East and West Europe have diplomatic relations with North Korea: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, GDR, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, USSR, Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia.

British Embassy, Thailand

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the current responsibilities and duties of the attaché (defence) at the British embassy in Thailand.

Mr. Sainsbury: The attaché (defence) is a member of the diplomatic service. He is engaged in general duties in support of the defence section in Bangkok.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the current responsibilities and duties of the defence and military attaché at the British embassy in Thailand.

Mr. Sainsbury: The defence and military attaché is a member of the defence section in the British embassy in Bangkok. He shares responsibility for liaising with the Thai defence authorities on a range of military topics of common interest.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the current responsibilities and duties of the naval and air attaché at the British embassy in Thailand.

Mr. Sainsbury: The naval and air attaché is a member of the defence section in the British embassy in Bangkok. He shares responsibility for liasing with the Thai defence authorities on a range of military topics of common interest.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans exist to transfer staff from the British embassy in Thailand.

Mr. Sainsbury: Staff from the British embassy in Thailand will be transferred at the end of their tours of duty.

Cambodia

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to prevent the Khmer Rouge from returning to Cambodia and seizing power through military action; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: We are working with our friends and partners to prevent the Khmer Rouge from seizing power in Cambodia by supporting and promoting a comprehensive settlement which enables the Cambodian people to elect a Government of their own choice.

Mr. Alex Carlile: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why Her Majesty's Government have not opposed acceptance of the credentials of the coalition Government who currently occupy Democratic Kampuchea's United Nations seat.

Mr. Sainsbury: We accept the legal and technical recommendations of the United Nations credentials committee on the credentials of representatives of member states. When the General Assembly adopted this year's report of the credentials committee on 17 October, our representative made it clear that our position on the credentials of Democratic Kampuchea should not be taken to imply support for the Khmer Rouge; and made clear our abhorrence of Pol Pot.

Dalai Lama

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to meet the Dalai Lama when he next pays a visit to the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: We have always recognised the Dalai Lama's role as a distinguished spiritual leader, and he is welcome to visit the United Kingdom at any time. Nevertheless, he is regarded by many of his followers as the leader of a government in exile, which is not recognised by any Government and with which successive British Governments have had no dealings. A meeting between a Government Minister and the Dalai Lama would thus be open to misinterpretation.

Tibet

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations Her Majesty's Government have made to China on the question of human rights in Tibet.

Mr. Maude: We have, on frequent occasions, made clear to the Chinese, in public and in private, our concern about human rights in Tibet. We shall continue to take appropriate opportunities to do so. But our most urgent concern since 3 and 4 June has been to bring home to the Chinese the need for greater respect for human rights in China as a whole.

Mr. Parry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Government were informed of the recent visit of three hon. Members to Tibet; and if the Government were involved in the planning of it.

Mr. Maude: We were informed of the visit by the three hon. Members some weeks in advance. The planning of the visit was the responsibility of the Chinese authorities. Her Majesty's embassy in Peking provided assistance with practical arrangements.

ENVIRONMENT

Pollution (London)

Mr. Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, per year since 1979, the levels of pollution of London's air at ground level by *(a)* carbon dioxide, *(b)* sulphur dioxide and *(c)* methane.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

Environmental Health Officers

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the number of environmental health officers currently employed by local authorities and state what additional provision he is making to encourage more posts to be made available.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: I will write to the hon. Member.

Disabled People (Poll Tax)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the grounds on which disabled people are exempt from poll tax payments.

Mr. Chope: I will write to the hon. Member.

Bottle Glass (Palace of Westminster)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to ensure that bottle glass from the Palace of Westminster is recycled.

Mr. Chope: The contractor employed by the Property Services Agency to dispose of all waste, including glass, from the Palace of Westminster, is required to provide bottle bank facilities. They are sited in State Officers' Court, alongside the collection point for other waste and any glass which is placed in these containers is sent for recycling by the contractor.

London Riverbus

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department will assist the London Docklands riverbus service by waiving licence fees for the piers used by the riverbus currently owned by his Department or its agencies.

Mr. Moynihan: LDDC owns the freehold of the pier at Greenland dock used by the riverbus, but management and security are provided by a lessee. The lessee reasonably expects a contribution by the riverbus service towards costs.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the London Docklands development corporation on the future of the riverbus service.

Mr. Moynihan: The Department's officials have discussed the service with the LDDC.

Docklands (Transport Infrastructure)

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of the money spent by his Department or its agencies on improvements in public transport infrastructure in the London Docklands in the last 10 years has been spent *(a)* in the areas south of the River Thames; and *(b)* within the London borough of Southwark.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to the hon. Member.

Special Wastes

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many large chemical incinerators there are in Britain that can handle special wastes;

(2) if he will provide an estimate of the total amount of special wastes dumped at Leigh environmental waste disposal site in Walsall;

(3) what information he has as to the number of large chemical incinerators which can handle special wastes in *(a)* the European Community (excluding the United Kingdom) and *(b)* the rest of the world;

(4) what information he has as to the amount of special wastes incinerated on board ships during 1988 *(a)* in the North sea and *(b)* in European waters;

(5) what information he has as to the number of large chemical incinerators for toxic wastes worldwide having *(a)* a double door with an air-lock and *(b)* a single door;

(6) what is the total amount of special wastes that have been subjected to the Leigh environmental sealosafe solidification process; and what proportion of this is in a non-solid form;

(7) what quantities of special wastes were imported into Britain for incineration for every year from 1979 to the present time;

(8) if he will give details of the amounts found by Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution of PCBs and dioxin in the flue gases from the Rechem International incinerator plant at Ponteg, Pontypool; and what information he has on comparable figures of large chemical incinerators in mainland Europe;

(9) if he will summarise the results found by Her Majesty's inspectorate for pollution of tests for PCBs and dioxin in herbage and soil samples around the Rechem incinerator plant at Ponteg, Pontypool;

(10) what amounts of chemical waste were incinerated at the Rechem plant in Pontypool in each year from 1985 to the present; and what quantities of PCB contaminated waste were handled each year;

(11) what estimate he has on the cumulative total amount of PCBs manufactured over the last 30 years in *(a)* the Monsanto chemical works in Newport, Gwent, *(b)* Britain, *(c)* Western Europe and *(d)* worldwide;

(12) what information he has of alternative methods to incineration now being considered for the destruction of polychlorinated bi-phenyls;

(13) whether Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution will consider the installation of continuous monitoring equipment to measure the amounts of PCBs and dioxin in the flue gases from the Rechem plant in Pontypool;

(14) what quantities of flyash have been imported through Swansea Docks for every year from 1979 to the present time; and what are the results of analyses carried out for dioxin in such flyash.

Mr. Trippier: I will write to the hon. Member.

Bathroom and Sanitaryware (Imports)

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received recently concerning imports of bathroom and sanitaryware; and what reply he gave.

Mr. Chope: I am aware of no such representations.

British Summertime

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment he has made of the effects of the proposed alterations to British summertime on productivity in the construction industry.

Mr. Chope: None; however, representations received from the construction industry are being considered by my right hon. and learned Friend the Home Secretary.

Pathfinder

Mrs. Ann Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what correspondence he has received with regard to the accuracy of the Pathfinder prospectus launched on 3 November.

Mr. Howard: I will write to the hon. Member.

Water

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the trustees for each water holding company's trust scheme for employee share ownership, stating in each case their connection with the water holding company;

(2) if he will list for each regional rivers advisory committee each member who is either a board member or a senior employee of a water plc;

(3) if he will list for each regional fisheries advisory committee each member who is either a board member or a senior employee of a water plc;

(4) how many technical assessors of water quality he intends to appoint within his Department;

(5) whether his Department has issued any research contracts relating to surface and groundwater quality within the last 12 months.

Mr. Chris Patten: I will write to the hon. Member.

Mersey Basin

Mr. James Lamond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) when he expects to make an announcement regarding European Community funding through the Mersey basin phase II programme;

(2) if he will exclude water-related projects from the Mersey basin phase II programmes in order to attract European regional development funds.

Mr. Moynihan: I will write to the hon. Member.

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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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SESSION 1988–89

4th December—15th December 1989

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

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Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R=first reading, 2R=second reading, Money res=money resolution, Com=Committee stage, Rep=Report stage, 3R=third reading, amendt/amendts=amendment/amendments, *=matter taken formally, without debate.

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